

FOR GOD AND GOLD

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BY

JULIAN CORBETT

AUTHOR OF 'THE FALL OF ASGARD'

London

MACMILLAN AND CO.

AND NEW YORK

1888

FOR GOD AND GOLD

CALLING ON THIS AILING AGE TO ESCHEW THE SINS AND IMITATE
THE VIRTUES OF

MR. JASPER FESTING

SOMETIME FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE IN CAMBRIDGE, AND LATE AN OFFICER
IN HER MAJESTY'S SEA-SERVICE

BY THIS SHOWING FORTH OF

Certain noteworthy passages from his Life in the said University and
elsewhere, and especially his connection with the beginning of

The Puritan Party

Together with a particular relation of his Voyage to

Rombre de Dios

Under that renowned Navigator

THE LATE

SIR FRANCIS DRAKE, KNIGHT

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

AND NOW FIRST SET FORTH

P R E F A C E

It is not to be denied that the usual practice in ushering into the world a long-hidden manuscript has been to give some account of its existence in its former state, and of the manner in which it came to light. For sufficient reasons that course will not be followed in the present case.

Should any one in consequence be brought to doubt the genuineness of these memoirs, it is hoped that it will be sufficient to refer him to a curious little work entitled *Sir Francis Drake Revived*, which contains a very sprightly account of that renowned navigator's so-called Third Voyage to the Indies, being that in which he attempted Nombre de Dios, and which, as the title-leaf recites, is 'faithfully taken out of the report of Master Christopher Ceely, Ellis Hixom, and others who were in the same voyage with him, by Philip Nichols, Preacher; Reviewed also by Sir Francis Drake himself before his death, and much holpen and enlarged by divers notes with his

own hand here and there inserted, and set forth by Sir Francis Drake (his nephew), now living, 1626.'

So closely do the present memoirs follow that account that it cannot reasonably be doubted that Mr. Festing was one of those 'others' who had a hand in Preacher Nichols's book, although neither he nor Mr. Waldyve are mentioned as being of the expedition. When we consider the circumstances under which they sailed, it is only natural to suppose that they made it a condition of their assistance that their names should be suppressed in the published narrative; and, in view of this supposition, it is not unworthy to be noted that Nichols makes no mention of a 'captain of the land-soldiers' or a 'merchant' as sailing with Drake, although it is known that these officials formed part of all well-ordered expeditions to the Spanish Main.

Of course some small discrepancies will be found between the two accounts, but they are unimportant, and seem rather to confirm the general accuracy of Mr. Festing's memoirs than to cast any suspicion upon them. For instance, Nichols gives the name of the man who 'spoiled all' in the first attempt on the *recuas* as Pike, but there can be no doubt that, by an obvious word-play which would commend itself to an Elizabethan punster, the name of the infantry weapon was substituted for that of Culverin out of tenderness for the old Sergeant's memory.

Such instances might be multiplied indefinitely, but

it appears better to suffer the curious to note and comment upon them for themselves. Should any such be tempted to pursue the subject farther, he will find an interesting account of Signor Giampietro Pugliano in a letter of Sir Philip Sidney's, who describes the esquire of the Emperor's stables in much the same terms as those which Sergeant Culverin was in the habit of using.

In fact, Mr. Festing's memoirs receive confirmation from contemporary sources too numerous to set out here. He mentions indeed only one event of any historical or biographical importance which has not been found either related or referred to by other trustworthy writers, and that is the piratical attack of Drake upon the Antwerp caravel—an exploit about which all parties concerned no doubt took good care to keep their own counsel.

These considerations, it is felt, will be enough to carry conviction to what Mr. Festing would have called 'all honest kindly readers.' To the merciful dealing of such his memoirs are now therefore committed without further excuse, defence, or apology.

J. C.

FOR GOD AND GOLD

CHAPTER I

ERASMUS, in his *Praise of Folly*, has uttered a sharp note against those scribbling fops who think to eternise their memory by setting up for authors, and especially those who spoil paper in blotting it with mere trifles and impertinences. Yet have I, that was none before, resolved to turn author, and set down certain passages in my life that I have thought not unworthy to be remembered.

Many who share my respect for him who is rightly called the honour of learning of all our time, forgetting therein, as it must be said, all tenderness for me, have marvelled openly that I listen not to his wisdom, but will still be spending paper, time, and candles upon such trifles and impertinences as he condemns. It were better, say they, for a scholar to take in hand some weighty matter of religion, or philosophy, or civil government.

But stay, good friends, till I bid you show me how

it were better. Such treatises are ordnance of power; and are we sure that of late years scholars have not been forging too many weapons for dunces to arm themselves withal in these wordy wars that now be? A harquebuss is a dangerous toy in unskilled hands, and so I know may be a discourse of religion, or philosophy, or civil government to unlearned controversialists, of whom, God knows, there is a mighty company in this present time.

So, I pray you, consider whether Erasmus has not here a little dishonoured his scholarship and sounded his note false. Should he not rather have placed amidst all other folly that he praises these very trifles and impertinences also with which a scholar may seek to comfort his solitude?

I am the more moved to the part I have chosen because it is not clear that all I have to tell shall be found wholly trifling and impertinent. Indeed I think it may contain something noteworthy, not in respect of myself, or even of that noble gentleman whose story this is as much as mine, but rather in respect of that very mirror and pattern of manhood who was my good friend in those days, though now with God, and whom of all I ever knew or heard of I honour as in courage unsurpassed, in counsel unequalled, and in constancy passing all I ever deserved.

So much by way of preface or apology; and now, 'with a good wish on all honest, kindly readers, let me 'to my tale.

As with many others, my life, it may be said, began

with my father's death. Till then I had been kept in so great subjection that, save in my books, I had hardly lived. For he was an austere, grave man of the Reformation party, and one whom the fires of Mary's reign had hardened against all Popery, so that towards the end of his life he became what is now called 'a Puritan, ay, and that of a strict sort too.

Outwardly to his great friends in the county he was still good company. For, not to speak more, because of the honour I bear him, he was a worldly man, and not one to use a shoe-horn to drag ill-fitting opinions on to men of quality, nor in any way to seek a martyr's crown. His chiding and severity were kept for me and his servants and tenants, who were all hard-pressed, though, in truth, not beyond what justice would warrant were mercy laid aside.

It was a hard case for me, because of my mother I had not even a memory. The same hour that I was born she died, leaving my father alone in the world save for me. It was then that he most changed, they told me, but in no respect showed his grief so much as in misliking me.

Yet I think I loved him, for all his chiding and sharpness. Indeed I had so little else to love. At least I know that I was sobbing bitterly when my old nurse came to tell me that his short sickness had come suddenly to an end; for he had but a little time past been seized with a quartan ague, which carried off so many that same glorious year that our great Queen came to her throne.

It was a cold, gray afternoon in January. I was sitting, hungry and forgotten, in my favourite nook in the dim old library. It was an ancient, low room, which my father had left standing when he had rebuilt the rest of the place in the new style soon after he had purchased it. It had been a house of Austin Canons which fell to the lot of some spendthrift courtier in King Henry's time, which gentleman, getting past his depth in my father's books with over much borrowing, was at last driven to release the place to him. So it was that the old monastery became our dwelling, but this, the Canons' refectory, was all that was left of the former buildings.

At one end there was a deep recess, where I could sit and see the dreary darkness settling down on the distant Medway, and the Upchurch Marshes, and the Saltings. It was but a sad prospect at any time in winter, and made me sad, though I would never sit elsewhere with my books. I must have loved it because my father never came to chide me there, and because on that cold stone sill I could sit and sob undisturbed over the sorrows of men long dead, as I now sat sobbing over my own, when Cicely came hurriedly to me.

'The Lord has taken him, Master Jasper,' she cried, as well as her sobs would allow. 'The Lord has taken him, before I could call you to see how sweet an ending he made. God-a-mercy on him, for he was a just and upright gentleman, and one that dallied not with mercy, and died a good Reformation man. Ay, that he did, and would see never a priest of them all, with their hocus-

pocus and Jack-in-the-box, and their square caps and their Latins. When the end was coming he cried out, "God-a-mercy on me and all usurers," once or twice he did, for the usurers seemed to trouble him. *So I opened the windows, and bade him not trouble himself with the rogues at such a time, but get on sweetly with his dying. That was a comfort to him, I know, for he grew quiet then, and passed away with but one more cry for mercy on them. May the rogues be better for a good man's prayers, that he shall pray no more! For 'tis all passed, 'tis all passed; and you are Squire of Longdene now, Master Jasper; and maybe your worship would like to see how your father lies.'

I dried my tears then, for I had been dreading the summons to see him die, and felt glad that I was spared the sight. I was able to follow Cicely into the great chamber where he lay, and look bravely for the last time on the wise, hard face.

It was when I came out that I felt indeed my life had begun. For there stood old Miles, our steward, who had married my nurse, bowing respectfully.

'A wise man has gone this day, sir,' he said, 'and a godly and a rich. May the Lord in His mercy give your worship strength to bear his loss and walk in his footsteps.'

It lifted me up strangely to hear him speak thus; for I was but fourteen years old, and had never been called 'your worship' before, except sometimes on Saturdays by the Medway fisher lads, who knew I had groats in my wallet then. To hear Miles thus call me

was a thing I could hardly understand. He who had barely a word for me, except to scold when he caught me bird-nesting in the orchard, or swear after me in breathless chase when I flew my hawk at his pigeons, as happened more than once when Harry came to see me and my father was away.

It is time I should tell of Harry, my friend and rival, my almost brother ; for his life was, and, I thank God for His mercy, still is, in spite of all the wrong I did, so bound up in mine, that I cannot tell my tale without unfolding his.

He was the only son of Sir Fulke Waldyve, a gentleman of good estate and ancient family near Rochester, in Kent, and a good neighbour of ours. Ever since my father had come to live at Longdene, Sir Fulke and he had been fast friends. Not that they had much to make them so. For Sir Fulke was an old soldier and courtier of King Henry's day, and had named his only son after him as the pattern of manhood. From the like cause he swore roundly rasping Tudor oaths at all that displeased him, ay, and much that he loved too, from mere habit, but above all at Puritans and those who thought Reformation should go further than his idol King Henry had carried it. In all ways the knight was a man of the old time, while my father was held one of the new men, whom many thought to be ruining the country. He had been a wool merchant in London, and had made much money at trading and by other ways that merchants use.

Even I used to wonder to see them so friendly, and

used to watch them by the hour together through a hole I knew of in the yew hedge, as they sat drinking in our orchard after dinner in the summer-time. Sir Fulke was so round and red, with his curly beard and his sunburnt face and his merry blue eyes, and my father was so pale and spare and grave. I wondered how men could be so little alike, and wondered how it would have been with me if that rough old knight had been my father instead of the courtly merchant by his side.

‘By this light,’ I have heard Sir Fulke burst out in the midst of their talk, ‘I marvel every day what a God’s name makes me love you, Nick. Your sour face should be as much a rebel in my heart as your damned French claret is in my stomach. Were it not that you are so good a tippler, I would say that at heart you were no better than a pestilent, pragmatistical rogue of a Calvinist.’

‘Nay, Fulke,’ my father would say quickly in his courtly way, being, as it seemed, in no way offended that the old knight should speak to him so roughly, for they always said my father, like other merchants who have thriven, was slow to take offence with men of ancient lineage and good estate; ‘what matter that our outward seeming is different? That is only because our lots were cast differently. Not what we are, but what we love, is the talk of friends.’

‘Ay, by God’s power,’ Sir Fulke would cry, ‘you have hit it now most nicely, Nick. You love a long fleece, and so do I. You love a fair stretch of meadow-land, and so do I. You love a well-grown tree, and so do I; ay, and, you rogue, you love a full money-bag,

and so, by this light, do I. Mass, but I run myself out of breath with our likings, and sack must run me back again.'

'Indeed,' my father would answer, 'were it only our delights that we share, I think it would be bond enough, without a common sorrow to help it.'

'Ay, ay, Nick; that is it,' the old knight would murmur, sad in a moment, for Harry's mother, too, had died in childbed. 'But speak not of that. God rest her sweet soul! What is there divided that she could not bring together?'

And so they would fall into silence awhile, till Sir Fulke's eye was dry again, and his thoughts had wandered away from the beautiful woman whom, late in life, he had loved and married and lost, to some new plan he had for mending his estate upon which he wanted his friend's counsel.

It is little to be wondered at, then, that a great friendship grew up also between Harry and me. We were little more alike, I think, than our fathers. For on Harry descended all the sunny beauty of his mother. Indeed, afterwards, when as a page at Court he personated the Princess Cleopatra in a masque before the Queen's grace, an old lord who was in presence swore it must be the gentle Lady Waldyve alive again. He was lithe and active too, and of quick and nimble wit, and as long as I can remember could always give the fisher lads more than he took, either with fist or tongue.

But more than all this, it was his gentle, loving spirit that won and kept my love in spite of all our boyish

quarrels, ay, and of a greater thing than that. When I think of his noble nature, which never allowed him to turn a span's breadth from the path of honour, the lofty patience wherewith he bore my shortcomings, the tender sympathy I won from him in all my troubles, I can still kneel down and thank God that gave me such a friend to carry a light before me in the way a gentleman should walk.

So what wonder then that I loved him as I loved no one else—save one, of whom I shall forbear yet to speak, until my tale compels me. Then I must, seeing it was surely God's will that tried me so sore.

Had Harry been other than he was, at the time at least of which I now speak, I must yet have loved him, for it was my father's will that I should.

'Jasper,' he would say to me sometimes when I had been reading at home, 'close your book and ride over to Ashtead to bid young Waldyve go a-hawking with you to-morrow. You must see more of him. For know, I would have you no merchant, or parson, or plain scholar, but a gentleman. You will have money, and he shall teach you how to spend it like a gentleman. Make him your friend, and be you his, or you shall smart for it.'

So away I would go blithely enough; for those days with Harry were the only happy ones I knew, though it must be said they often ended sadly with a rebuke and even chastisement from old Miles, till one day my father, seeing him, told him he would not have gainsaid any prank I played in company with Sir Fulke's son.

This I told Harry next day he came, thinking to strangely delight him; but instead, he looked grave, and swore one of his father's oaths that he would never fly hawk at Miles's pigeons again.

Such was my friend Harry Waldyve when, in the first year of our most glorious Queen's reign, whom God bless with fullest measure, my father died, and I began my life.

CHAPTER II

It was not till the morning after my father's death that Sir Fulke rode over from Ashtead with Harry. The old knight was redder in the face than ever. There were tears in his eyes, too, as he took my hand and sat down by the great hearth in the hall without speaking.

As for Harry, he threw his arms about my neck and shyly pressed into my hand his set of gilded hawk bells—the most precious thing he had. I had long envied him the toys, and his kindness set my tears flowing fast again.

‘Don’t grieve, Jasper,’ he said. ‘You must not grieve. Dad will be your father now. He said he would as we rode along. He told me to tell you he was your guardian now, and we are really brothers at last, Jasper.’

I looked at Sir Fulke, but he only nodded his head. His face was very red, and I knew he could not have spoken without sobbing. So Harry and I talked on in low tones till the old knight found his voice. He spoke angrily at last, but I did not mind his chiding, for somehow I knew it was only to hide his grief, lest we boys should see his weakness.

‘Yes, I am your guardian, lad,’ said he; ‘and since

I am, why, in God's name, did you not send for me before, instead of letting your father lie all night like a dog that none cares to bury ?'

'Please you, sir,' said I, 'Miles rode out an hour after he died, as I thought, to bring the news to you.'

'An hour after his death!' cried Sir Fulke. 'On what devil's errand went he then, for he came not to me till six o'clock this morning ?'

'Whither rode Miles last night?' I asked then of Cicely, who was sobbing hard by. 'Know you, and has he come back ?'

'Nay, I know not, your worships,' she said, 'save that he went to your worship, as he said, and—and——'

'And what, woman ?' cried Sir Fulke testily.

'On an errand of his dead master's, please your worships,' whimpered Cicely ; 'an errand, by your worship's leave, into Chatham.'

'And what, o' God's name,' cried the knight, 'took him there ?'

'Nay, I know not,' replied Cicely, with a look of that sort of humility, much used by her class, which is very near of kin to defiance. 'Unless it were to take order for his poor worship's funeral with the elect that be there.'

'What say you ?' roared Sir Fulke, 'you pestilent, canting scrag-end of Eve's flesh ! What, by the fat of the fiend, has your Calvinistic knave of a husband to do with a gentleman's funeral ? Knows he not, the dog, that it is I who shall order his master's affairs ? Is this all that comes of Festing's boasted discipline ? I told

him he was wrong, he was always wrong; and here's the end of it. The elect, too,—the elect knaves, the elect devils! Do you think, you canting jade, that because Mary is dead you shall play what pranks you like with a gentleman's body? By this light, you misjudge Henry's and Mistress Anne's daughter if your thick heads think that.'

By this time Sir Fulke had railed himself clean out of breath, and as he ceased we could hear the sound of horses' feet in the courtyard.

'Run, lads,' said Sir Fulke, 'and if that be Miles bring him before me.'

To the door we went, and sure enough found Miles had returned, but not alone. Dismounting from their shabby jades were two men, dressed all in black. One of them I knew by sight, having seen him about Chatham and Rochester. He had a round, red face, with a shrewd, solid look in it, and dancing blue eyes full of merriment, which even now, though I think he tried to look as grave as he could, he was unable to get master of.

His companion was a grave, dark-eyed man, of dull complexion, whose look repelled me as much as the other's attracted.

'Peace be on this house,' the two men chimed when they had finished tumbling off their horses, which they did in so clumsy a manner as even then almost made me laugh. 'Peace; and be its sorrow comforted.'

The red-faced man then came forward up the steps,^o and took my hand so kindly that I felt at once that I^o had found a new friend.

‘Master Festing,’ said he, ‘I know you, and desire your worship’s better acquaintance. Me you know not, though I was your good father’s friend. He would not have it so known; but let that pass. Know me for Master Drake, of Chatham, sometime preacher to his Majesty’s fleet, and soon to be again, let us hope, now the evil times be overpast and joyful days be come again for all true Reformation men.’

His black clothes were very shabby, and of old-fashioned cut, and there came with him up the steps and into the hall a savoury smell of tar and the sea.

‘Yes, my lad,’ went on Mr. Drake, for ‘your worship’ was quite out of tune with his kind, fatherly way, ‘this is an hour of sorrow for you, but one of joy for England. A weight is lifted from England’s heart, and yours shall rise with hers. For, saving a decent grief for your father’s loss, no true Englishman should weep when his country claps her hands and leaps with gladness.’

I did not well understand him then, though I knew he meant to comfort me. For in those days we knew little of what was coming, when such words as Mr. Drake’s would be on every one’s lips. England was crushed and broken then, shuddering still under the curse of Rome and Spain. I was no more a prophet than the rest, and could ill understand why this little red-faced preacher should draw himself up in his shabby clothes, with glittering eyes, till he almost looked as though he had come out of my *Plutarch*, best

loved of books. I was glad when he stopped and turned to his friend.

‘I had forgot,’ said Mr. Drake. ‘Be better acquainted with my right-worshipful and approved good friend, Mr. Death. One of the faithful flock, Mr. Festing, that through the bloody times, which now be past, has watched and prayed for England beyond the seas, in Frankfort; withstanding steadfastly all backsliders there, and helping Mr. Knox to file away the Popish rust that still clung to King Edward’s service-book.’

He seemed to think that because my father had been a secret but active Puritan, I must be one too, and well versed in all those unhappy controversies with which the English exiles made their banishment doubly hard, and laid the seeds of many troubles that even now grow each day ranker.

‘Ay, that I did,’ said Mr. Death, unfastening his hard lips, ‘and should have prevailed at last against that bad, factious Erastian, Dr. Cox, had he not so traitorously procured us to be driven forth by the Gallios of that city.’

‘If any man has dealt traitorously with you, Mr. Death,’ said Harry, ‘it were well you should come within and speak with my father, who is a Justice, and will see you righted, I doubt not.’

‘Ay,’ echoed I, ‘come within and speak with my guardian, who will surely welcome all my father’s friends.’

Our words had quite another effect to that which

we had expected. For both the preachers stopped short before the door, looking hard at each other. Mr. Death seemed to grow more pale than before, and to be at a loss what to do. But Mr. Drake's face I saw grow to so stern a look of resolution as only in one other have I seen equalled.

'Come, brother,' said he, 'we have a blow to strike, so let us strike quick and hard,' and with that he strode across the hall to where Sir Fulke was sitting, who sprang up fiercely when he saw the preachers.

'Drake!' cried he, 'what in the devil's name make you here?'

'In the devil's name I make nothing, Sir Fulke,' answered Drake unflinchingly; 'but come to stay you marring, in the devil's name, a dead man's wishes; and in God's name to charge you to deliver up to me the body of Nicholas Festing for burial.'

I verily believe that had it been the sour-faced Mr. Death that had given their errand he would there and then have been sent forth with such a dish of blows seasoned with hot railing as would have kept him satisfied for many a day. But Sir Fulke, like King Henry and our blessed Queen, knew a man when he saw him, and surprised me by his quiet answer.

'You open your mouth wide, Drake,' said he; 'by what authority do you expect me to fill it?'

'Here is one,' answered Drake, 'that you will be the last to gainsay, if men know you for what you are,' and with that he took from his breast a paper and handed it to Sir Fulke. He carefully examined the

signature and writing, and then gave it back to Drake.

‘Nicholas Festing wrote that, I doubt not,’ said he; and then, looking Drake hard in the face, went on, ‘Read it to me, and read it truly, if you are a man.’

Without wincing a jot under Sir Fulke’s stare, Mr. Drake took the paper and read as follows :—‘Know all men whom it may concern, and above all Sir Fulke Waldyve of Ashtead, knight, to whom I have given care of all my earthly affairs, that it is my last will that in all which concerns the spiritual and heavenly part of me no man shall meddle, save as my approved friend Mr. Drake, preacher, of Chatham, shall direct; and him I charge to deliver my soul to God, and my body to earth, after the manner of the reformed Church, and free from Popish, idolatrous, and superstitious ceremonies, saving always the laws of this realm. For I would have all men know that I die, as I have lived, in the purified and ancient Church of Christ, in testimony whereof, above all, I desire to be buried without jangling of bells, or mistrustful prayers, or conjuring with incense, as though my happy state with God were doubtful, and reverently laid in the earth, with thanks to God, in certain hope of a glorious resurrection.’

For a moment Sir Fulke looked at me, as though he would ask me to read the paper too, but almost immediately he stared hard again at Mr. Drake, and was satisfied.

‘Enough,’ he said, plainly much pained. ‘How will you bury him?’

‘By the rites in use amongst the true English remnant at Geneva,’ croaked Mr. Death, who, seeing all danger was over, now came forward. ‘There alone is found the true law of God, there alone has the threshing-floor been swept clean of——’

‘Peace, fool,’ said Sir Fulke sharply. ‘If Nicholas Festing wishes to be put under the sod like a canting Calvinistical knave, by God’s head, he shall be, saving always, as he said, the laws of this realm. I want no pestilent, heretical sermons from you, but only information to lay before the Council, whither I ride this very day, according to my duty as a Justice of the Queen’s most excellent Majesty. And, look you, Drake, promise me to do nothing till I return.’

‘My hand on that, Sir Fulke,’ said Drake, heartily holding out a hand not unstained with pitch, which my guardian, after a moment’s hesitation, took.

With that the preachers departed, and Sir Fulke soon after followed them on his way to London, much saddened, as I think, to see what manner of man his friend had been.

Whether he was heard by the Council or not I cannot tell. Certain it is, however, that on his return he took no steps to prevent the funeral. I expect, if the truth were known, his zeal won little encouragement from the Council. For in the early days of our wise Queen’s reign, in spite of an ordinance against using new doctrines or ceremonies without authority, and the proclamation against King Edward’s service-book, which had been given out the month before, things were left to go on

with as little mud-stirring as possible, until Parliament could be brought together.

I doubt not the poor old knight lamented bitterly the high-handed days of his old master, King Henry ; but he was helpless, and a day was fixed for the funeral to take place at our little church.

Well I remember that sunny January morning, and how I dreaded what was to come. At an early hour great numbers of people came flocking out of Rochester, Sittingbourne, and the villages around to Longdene. For, since this was but the first year of the Queen's reign, no one knew as yet of a certainty what order would be taken in ecclesiastical matters, and the news that a gentleman was to be buried after a new and reformed manner attracted many, since these things, being the first that had been seen in Kent, were accounted strange at the time, and somewhat boldly done, when as yet the old religion was still in force.

The people came rejoicing, with baskets of food, as though to a wedding or glutton mass rather than to a funeral. To me alone, in all that multitude, it was an occasion of sadness. It was the first time the people had had brought home to them that the days of England's shame and bondage were over, and when I looked upon the crowd before the gate, eating and drinking and laughing, as they waited for the body to come forth, I began to know what Mr. Drake had meant, when he said that a weight was lifted from England's heart, though it only made heavier the load on mine.

So brightly shone the sun, and so radiant were those

happy people, scarce one of whom had not lost a friend or kinsman in poor Wyatt's mad attempt to do by force what God had now done so quietly by Mary's death, that I alone of all the world seemed sad, and in my utter loneliness I turned away and wept bitterly.

Mr. Drake was in the room, talking in high spirits to a knot of preachers who had just arrived. Many, I was told, had come down from London to do honour to the great occasion, as they called it, but I forget their names, if I ever knew them.

Good Mr. Drake must have heard my sobs, for he came forward out of the gloomy throng and spoke to me very kindly.

'Come, lad, come,' said he, with his tarry hand on my shoulder; 'have a stout heart. This is a proud day for you, a day of rejoicing in the Lord, that it is given you to bear witness of England's new life, and not, as was vouchsafed to me and others here, to bear witness of her slow cankering death. All England will praise you for this day's work. Ay, and beyond the seas too, many a poor Fleming, and Frenchman, and German who was losing heart will smile happily when he hears Nicholas Festing's name, and envy his son the part God gave him to play.'

Hearing Mr. Drake's words, the preachers gathered round us and vied with each other in giving me drafts of comfort, rather, as it seemed to me, for their own glorification in each other's eyes, by showing their cunning in the brewing of such phrases, than from any desire to console me.

'Affliction, Master Festing,' said a fat, pale-faced man, 'is the mustard of the spirit; for even as that excellent sauce maketh the stomach lusty to receive meat, so doth sorrow stir up the heart to a desire for the Word,' and with that he smacked his lips and looked towards the sideboard, which Cicely was already furnishing with meat against our return.

'Rejoice, too, my boy, in your tears,' said Mr. Death, 'for they be the water to drive the mill which shall grind in pieces the stumbling-blocks of your soul.'

'And groaning, sir,' said another, 'is the portion of the elect, who, being predestined to the eternal company of God, must not defile their spirit with the joy of the world, which fills the stomachs of the eternally damned.'

'Softly, softly, sir,' interposed a heady-looking man; 'comfort the boy, if you will, but comfort him according to the Word.'

'And who are you,' retorted the other angrily, 'to teach me what is according to the Word, and what is not?'

'Brethren, brethren,' cried a mild, grave-looking man with a refined and scholarly face, 'I pray you remember on what errand you are. On a day of triumph like this, is it for the victors to quarrel? Moreover, it is time we departed. Mr. Drake, I pray you order our manner of proceeding.'

With that we started, to my no small joy, for I was longing to be alone in the old library again, and none of those men, save Mr. Drake, brought any comfort to my aching heart.

It must have been a strange sight, when I come to think of it now, as we crossed the sunlit court and sallied out between the crowds of eager faces that lined the way. Instead of the throng of clerks in gay attire who used to precede the coffin at burials of persons of note, swinging censers, and singing for the soul of the departed, there were none but the black company of preachers in their gowns and Geneva caps.

The people joined in behind me where I walked with Miles and Cicely, and the long line wound down to the church in the valley between the frosty hedgerows and the young woods my father had planted.

I knew the little moss-grown church well, for it was a favourite resting-place for Miles's pigeons. They, I think, were the only living things that cared for it, except a few ill-tempered jackdaws and one or two old bent women, who came to mutter prayers upon their beads amongst the mouldering stones.

I do not think there had been a parson there since King Henry's time, certainly none that I could remember, except on rare occasions when one came out of Rochester to shiver through a homily or a funeral, as well as the jackdaws and the chilling damp would allow.

It was a place all shunned for its ghostliness, unless they had a special call to go there, which indeed was seldom; for there was not even a door upon which the parish notices could be fixed. The wood had long ago gone to make fires, and the wide-spreading hinges, all bent and rusty, hung down with an air of mourning.

But the pigeons and the jackdaws quarrelled for the place. It was a pleasant spot for them. All that savoured of Popery, which was all the church contained, had been torn down, I think, in Edward's days. Rood-screen and all were gone—perhaps to cook a Reformation pot with the door. Thus the birds could fly in and out as they liked, and rest out of the way of stones and hawks, till Harry hustled them out.

The little painted windows still remained. They were very Popish things, with the Virgin and I know not what saints upon them. But it did not matter, for the spiders and the ivy—good reformers they—had nearly hidden them from sight, so, as it was thought too costly to replace them with white glass, they had been allowed to remain.

A grave had been prepared for my father at the end of the north aisle, where once was a chapel of St. Thomas, and where were still to be seen, moss-grown and time-stained, two or three tombs of the Abbots of Longdene. There was great difficulty, I remember, in getting the coffin so far, because the pavement was all loose, and in some part quite thrust out of place by the rats and the fungus.

As many of the people as there was room for thronged in after us, and jostled each other for the best places with many a rude jest. Such irreverence was very hard for me to bear, but I do not wish to condemn them for it. It was done from no ill-will to me or my father, but only from that same exuberant spirit of joy which was beginning to fill all men's hearts when

each day they saw more clearly that England's night was done.

The preachers alone seemed in earnest; for they, good men, had suffered much, and this thing that we were now upon must have seemed too serious and heaven-sent for idle gaiety.

I was more at ease when the scholarly-looking gentleman began the service. His soft, full voice quieted the people directly, and the beautiful words he spoke kept them in rapt attention in spite of their crowding to see what was to be done.

No wonder, for now they heard, many for the first time in God's House, the voice of prayer go up in their own sweet English tongue. The preacher began with a collect, in which he commended the dead man's soul to God, and prayed that his sins committed in this world might be forgiven him, that the gates of heaven might be opened to him, and his body raised up upon the last day. So lovely did the well-balanced, earnest words sound in our dear old speech that I saw tears in many an eye before he had done, and the amen, in which all joined at its end, was half choked with sobs.

Incontinently they lowered then the coffin in the grave, and covered it with earth, while the old preacher read an epistle taken from 1 Thessalonians iv.

Deeper and deeper grew the silence, and less and less my pain, as the heart-stirring words fell upon the listening throng: 'I would not, brethren, have you ignorant concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as other which have no hope. For if we believe

that Jesus is dead and is risen, even so them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.'

So the solemn periods marched on to the end. 'Wherefore comfort yourselves one another with these words,' and therewith the white-haired scholar kneeled down, and began with a loud, full voice to sing in English the Paternoster.

A sound, as it seemed to me, like the rustle of angels' wings filled the mouldering church as the whole throng with one accord kneeled with the preacher and joined him as he sang, women and all. Neither I nor any there, I think, save the preachers, had heard such a thing before. And surely it was the sweet women's voices that made our singing sound so holy in my ears, and lifted up my heart with such a heaven-born content that at last I could feel indeed that it was not a day for sorrow, but one in which I too must rejoice with England.

Our Paternoster was followed by a sermon, in which, after a few words on death and eternal life, the preacher fell to exhorting the people to be earnest in carrying out the work, and not to be content with a pretended evangelical reformation, suffering such things to be obtruded on the Church as should make easy the returning back to Popery, superstition, and idolatry. They had seen, he said, in Germany the evil of suffering, under colour of giving small offence, many stumbling-blocks, which after the first beginnings were hard to get removed, at least not without great strugglings.

But, indeed, I remember little of what the good man

said ; for I was but a boy then, and my mind would ever be fixing itself on the jagged ends of the rood-screen, which had been left sticking from the wall when it had been hewn away.

‘Pity it is,’ I said to my thoughts, ‘they were not clean rooted out. Even now they might wound a man’s limbs who was passing unawares, and time will come when they will grow corrupt, and as they rot away make the arch unstable.’

Little I thought then how true a type those same poor beam-ends would prove of all that was to come on England ere many years were gone.

CHAPTER III

It would be wearisome for me to relate all that passed in the weeks that followed my father's funeral, even if I could. But indeed I remember little, except confusedly about men of law who came from London and had long speech with my guardian.

In the business of setting my father's affairs in order I too was a good deal mixed.

'You cannot know too soon,' Sir Fulke said to me, 'what your estate will be. I am one who thinks a lad cannot learn too early to be a good steward, and so thought your father too, Jasper. So from the first I would see you have a say in your own affairs.'

Thus it came about that I was always present when the lawyers came, and though at first I found it irksome, I soon began to take interest in my estate.

Yet one event of these days I must relate, seeing that it was the beginning of things which afterwards played so great a part in my life.

I rode into Rochester one day to see a man of law who dwelt there. As we descended the steep hill that leads from off the downs to the low-lying ground, the whole district was stretched out like a map below us.

We could see straight before us the compact little city of Rochester, a mass of red roofs girded with a soft belt of trees, and crowding round the Cathedral and the great Castle, still grim and solid in its decay. About it ran the yellow river in one grand sweep from the bridge to where it turned again between Upnor Castle and the dock at the growing village of Chatham. Right in front of us, where the road was swallowed up between the two round towers of the city gate, was a great crowd. It was no strange thing to see, for hither were wont to gather the mariners from the fleet which rode between the bridge and Upnor and the workmen from the dockyard; that they might gossip and drink at the taverns which lined the way without the gate. To-day, however, it was a greater crowd than usual; so great indeed that we could not pass and had to draw rein.

‘What, in the fiend’s name,’ cried Sir Fulke, ‘brings all these stockfish gaping here to block a gentleman’s path?’

‘’Tis Drake, ’tis preaching Drake,’ said a good-humoured, weather-beaten sailor who stood by. And sure enough it was; for no sooner were the words out of our friend’s mouth than Mr. Drake’s jolly red face appeared above the heads of the crowd, as he mounted a stool close to the gate.

‘Come, hearken, mariners,’ he cried, ‘hearken to the Word of God and the whistle of the Lord’s boat-swain. For the Word of God is like unto a capstan. You can turn it about and about till you tear up the anchor that binds you to earth. Come, then, my lads,

and turn it about with me till you tear up the crooked anchor of sin, whereby the devil would moor you to the things of this world.'

This was as much as Sir Fulke could bear, and he cried out, 'What kennel preaching is this? Have you nothing better to liken the blessed Word of God to than a capstan?'

'And wherefore should I not?' cried Drake, not noticing from whom the interruption came. 'What ell of tar-yarn is this, that will take upon him to reprove the similitudes of a preacher to her Majesty's navy? Wherefore, I pray you, should not the Word of God be likened to a capstan, when that blessed servant of the Lord, even Hugh Latimer, did not himself scruple to liken the Mother of God to a saffron-bag?'

'Well, I'll grant you the similitude is right enough,' Sir Fulke called out again. 'For, by God's truth, it seems that a preacher nowadays can turn the Word about and about till he make it pull up anything he will.'

This sally produced a laugh from the rougher part of Drake's audience, and many began to cry out, 'What say you to that, master preacher? Has he not got you now?'

'What have I to say to it?' said Drake, turning fiercely on them. 'Know you not your own trade, you lubberly, roeless sons of herrings? Know you not that when you man a capstan you go but one way, like asses, that you are, in a clay-mill? So it is with the Word. There is one right way, that shall profit you to turn it, and if you twist it another it shall spin you heels over

ears in a heap, like the ungodly in the bottomless pit. My similitude was right enough, yet would I have defended it with greater courtesy had I known who challenged it. Make way, lads, make way for Sir Fulke Waldyve; for next under God you shall reverence our blessed Queen and all who hold her commission. Make way, and let me ask pardon for my discourtesy to our most worthy magistrate.'

'Enough, Drake, enough,' said Sir Fulke good-humouredly; 'you outrun me no less in courtesy than wit. Were all preachers such as you there would be little call from Injunctions against preaching without authority, but since such there be, I must even, in virtue of my office, bid you cease, and all this company disperse.'

That they did contentedly, with three cheers for the old knight, who was well known, and loved as much as known, at Rochester.

Mr. Drake was bidden to the 'Crown' by my guardian to take a cup of wine; for it was always his custom to try and part in friendship with those whom he had had occasion to chide.

'But what of the Injunctions about which you are so tender, Sir Fulke?' laughed Drake. 'You forget I am an ecclesiastical person, and may not haunt or resort to taverns or alehouses, *vide* Injunction No. 7.'

"Save for your honest necessities," returned Sir Fulke. 'So run the words; and your peace-making I hold, in my capacity of Justice, to be a most honest necessity. So come, with no more words, and save your tenderness for less honest occasions.'

So we went to the inn, and there they talked of the times quietly enough till the lawyer came in. Mr. Drake craved leave to carry me home with him when our business was done, that I might see his boys, of whom he seemed very proud, and fish with them on the morrow.

Sir Fulke demurred at first, but when Mr. Drake urged that it would cheer me a little, and perhaps bring the colour back to me, for I was but very poorly after my days of sorrow, my guardian at last consented.

Towards evening, then, Mr. Drake came back for me, and we sallied out together, Sir Fulke crying out as we left that Mr. Drake was not to send me back with any pestilent Calvinistic ideas in my head.

I was surprised that we went across the road down to the landing-stage just below the bridge. For I knew not where Mr. Drake's house could be if we must go to it by water, but I did not say anything till we had taken his boat and were clear of the turmoil which the fast-ebbing tide caused as it fought its way angrily through the narrow arches of the noble bridge.

'Where is your house, Mr. Drake?' I asked, as we reached the stiller water.

'Where is it, my boy?' answered he, chuckling to himself, as if vastly tickled by my question. 'Where, but on no man's land.'

'And where may that be?' asked I, not at all understanding his merriment.

'Why, in God's free tide-way, my lad,' said Mr. Drake, chuckling more heartily than ever. 'Where could an

Englishman, and above all a Devonshire man, live better than there, where there are no landlords and no taxes, and every one is his own king? You will know it some day, I hope. Frank knows it. My boys know it.'

I could not quite make out what he meant, and least of all who Frank was, and what he had to do with it. And no wonder, for then I did not know his strange habit of speaking of his sons as 'Frank and my boys.' I did not like to question him more, and was content to listen to him as he told me the names and services of the Queen's ships which we passed. There were a good many of them moored between the bridge and Upnor Castle, whereof some came to great renown afterwards, but then they were few and ill kept compared with what a man may see in the reach to-day.

Clean past Chatham and the one little dock that it then had we went, till we made the reach that runs toward Hoo. Here Mr. Drake stopped rowing and pointed down the river.

'Look, Master Festing,' cried he. 'There she lies, there ride her jolly old bones over no man's land. That is my house, that is my castle, that is where I live with Frank, when he is at home, and my boys.'

I looked to where he pointed, and saw an old hulk, after the fashion of King Henry VII.'s time, moored just out of the fair-way. A handsome vessel she must have been once, but was dismasted and plainly very old. I noted this to Mr. Drake.

'Ay,' he said, 'she is old, but trim and staunch yet. They say Cabot sailed in her to the Indies once; the

first man who touched the mainland, let the Spaniards say what they will. I know it, and Frank knows it, and so do my boys, and we are proud of it, as we ought to be, for he sailed from England in an English ship.'

'But why do you live there?' I asked.

'Well,' said he, 'I have a reason, and I may as well tell you now as later. I lived once near Tavistock, in beautiful Devon, on the banks of our sweet Tavy, and there I might be dwelling now, but that I began to smell the Word of God and know it from the stinking breath of the beast of Rome. Then the Lord sent me trials, which, I thank Him day and night, He gave me strength to bear. The Justices of Devon were, for the most part, very earnest for the old religion, and persecution grew hot for those who would not sign the Six Articles. I thank God I was one to whom He showed the filthy error of that first most pestilent and damnable doctrine concerning transubstantiation. For, look you, lad, they would have made us like unto themselves, who are worse than the cannibal savages of the Indies. They, in their devilish ignorance, do but eat the flesh of their enemies; but these, in their most pernicious self-will, would pretend to fill their lewd bellies with the flesh of their Redeemer. Even as I speak to you of it, lad, my words seem like poison that will blister my lips, and I shudder each time I think of it, that Christian men are found to set such wanton contumely upon their sweet Lord. Come what might, I was no man to sink my soul in the filth of such a hell-born superstition as that; so I rose up and fled from the destroyer hither

to Kent, where I knew true men were to be found. Here God showed me yonder hulk, which I purchased with the store of money I had saved. There dwelt I in peace till, in the fulness of time, King Henry died, and the godly men who stood around the throne of his son made me a preacher to the Royal Navy. So I continued reaping plenteously in the harvest of the Lord, until Edward's death thrust England once more down into the black pit of papacy and superstition.'

'But the day has broken again, now,' I said, remembering his former words, and wishing to win him back to the genial mood from which he had talked himself. He had been getting more and more like a great boy as we neared the ship and he talked of his sons, and I was sorry to have made him gloomy by my foolish questions.

'So it has, lad, so it has,' he cried, looking up quickly with the twinkle in his eyes again. 'It is growing brighter every hour; you shall help to brighten it, with God's good will, and so shall Frank, so shall my boys. But here we are almost alongside. Ahoy! ahoy! ahoy!'

No one answered to his shout, but as we came close alongside we could hear a strange commotion in the waist of the ship, into which, however, we could not see.

'They are about it again,' said Mr. Drake, with a chuckle; 'my boys are.'

'About what?' asked I.

'Fighting!' replied Mr. Drake, with increasing pride and delight. 'I know the sound. My boys fight as

much as any man's sons in all Rochester. Not many days pass without them getting about it.'

'But what do they fight about?' I asked.

'Don't bother your head with that,' replied Mr. Drake; 'they don't.'

With that we went aboard, and I saw the cause of all the hubbub. Stripped to the waist were two sturdy lads of about twelve and thirteen years of age. They were fighting furiously with their fists, to the great delight of nine other boys of all ages, varying from a little fellow not more than three years old to a lad of scarce less growth than the smaller of the two fighters.

The onlookers were cheering each telling blow, and hounding on their brothers to further efforts. Each time the others shouted I noticed that the baby cried out too, as loudly as his little lungs would allow, and beat on the deck with an old sword-hilt, which seemed to be his favourite and only plaything.

'There, Master Festing,' said Mr. Drake to me, beaming all over his round face, 'there are boys for a father to be proud of. Well done, Jack! 'Tis Jack and Joe,' he went on. 'You could not have had better luck; they are pretty fighters both.'

My answer was drowned in a fresh shout from the boys as they caught sight of their father.

'Come on, dad, come on,' they cried. 'Jack is winning again, but you shall still see some good sport before 'tis ended.'

They crowded round Mr. Drake to drag him by his cloak to where the two boys were still belabouring each

strike so shrewd a blow,—you with a pale face like that; but Frank could thrash you, and so he shall when he comes home, and then we will ask him to let you sail with us against Calais.'

I could not laugh at him any more, for I began to take a great liking to the sturdy lad, with his broad, flat face and curly hair, since I had knocked him down, and could quite forgive him for talking so big about his brother Frank.

'I am sorry I struck so hard,' said I.

'Nay, sir,' answered he, 'be not sorry. It is not every one can fell me like an ox, and besides, dad says England will want strong arms ere long. Won't she, dad?'

'Ay, that she will,' said Mr. Drake, who now came out from under the poop; 'and Mr. Festing will use his for her. But come to supper now.'

'Art going to be a soldier, lad?' he said to me, as soon as we were seated.

'I think I shall be scholar,' answered I. 'Sir Fulke says I am to go to Cambridge soon. It was my father's wish.'

'Well, he was a wise man,' said Mr. Drake, 'and doubtless knew best. But it seems to me that England will need pikes and swords sooner than books. Still, let that pass.'

'Don't let him be a scholar, dad,' said Jack. 'He must be a sailor, and sail with us to the Indies, and find new kingdoms, like the Spaniards, and bring back a cargo of gold and pearls. Tell him about the Indies, dad.'

So Mr. Drake, with a right good will, fell to talking of the wonders of the West, and we twelve boys sat round him, open-eyed, greedily devouring his words, while he spoke of the gilded king that was there, who ruled over mountains of gold; and of the Indians that hunted fish in the sea, as spaniels did rabbits; and of the great whelks that were three feet across; and of trees with leaves so big that one could cover a man, and almonds as large as a demi-culverin ball. I know not what other wonders he related, just as he heard them from the mariners who came thence, but we all grew greatly excited by his tales, and went to bed to dream things yet stranger than the truth.

Such was my first meeting with the Drake family, and fast friends we boys became, and though continually fighting amongst themselves for the lightest causes, they never offered to attack me again. Francis I never saw at this time. He was nearly always abroad, and when he returned it so happened that I could not get to see him. Still, whenever we got a day away from our grammar, Harry and I always slipped off with our cross-bows, to sail with the Drakes in their boat and fish and shoot wild-fowl.

Those were our happiest days. So greatly did the Drake boys take to Harry, after a fight or two, and so much did we take to the sea, that all our old pleasures were forsaken, and the pigeons and the jackdaws were left in quiet possession of the crumbling old church.

Nor were Mr. Drake's stories of the West the least cause of our love for the Medway and that aged hulk.

Harry was never tired of questioning the old navy preacher about it, and soon we began to worry our old tutor to tell us more.

For I must relate that I was now living almost entirely at Ashtead with Harry, that I might share with him the tutor whom Sir Fulke had secured for us. Poor old long-suffering Master Follet! How I wish I could know thee now! Surely when I look back to those days of patience, I know thou must have been the sweetest pedant that ever said his prayers to Aristotle. But then in my folly I knew thee not. I knew thee not for the gentle scholar thou wast, for the well-rounded compendium thou hadst made thyself of that old learning which is fast passing away,—the old, pure learning, which a man could seek so pleasantly when learning was books and naught but books, and he who knew them best was accounted wisest.

If Eve had not tempted nor Adam sinned, God might have given us that richest gift—to see the hours of our youth, as they pass, with the eyes that we look back upon them withal when they are gone. Alas! such wit I lacked and knew thee not, my gentle master, nor the hours in which I was free to rifle the treasure-house of thy polished wisdom. Had I but known, I might have tasted, ere they were yet dead, the sweets of those days when he who sought wisdom and would be accounted wise might sit out his life in the window-seat of his library, drinking in the voice of the mighty dead, while the world without glimmered softly in through the painted lattices upon the folio

before him, and wandered thence to kiss its sister volumes sleeping in the shelves.

Now that has changed, with much besides. Now must not a scholar be content with the light that comes softened and tender-hued through a library window if he would pass for wise amongst men. Now must he plunge out into the day and seek for the new wisdom amongst the haunts of thronging men, where the sunlight beats fierce and bright upon the world to show to him who fears not all its beauty, and all its baseness too.

Such wisdom was not our tutor's portion, and his want of it, instead of increasing our love for him, as now it would, was our chief ground of difference. We each day grew more full of the wonders of the West, not alone from what Mr. Drake told us, but also from what we heard direct from mariners, with whom groats could win us speech in Chatham and Rochester.

Well I remember how he answered when, having drunk dry our other wells, we made bold to try what we could find in our tutor.

'I am glad, my boys,' said he, with an anxious look in his delicate, wizened face and clear, brown eyes, 'that you have come to me in your trouble; for I perceive you have been speaking with some ignorant fellows, who have filled your heads with the folly that is now everywhere afloat. Beware of it as you would beware the fiend. So strong is this madness that has seized on men, and even scholars (if indeed they still deserve the name), that in so great a place as Paris even Aristotle has been called in question.'

He looked at us as he said this, pausing long with uplifted eyebrows to watch the effect which this announcement, to him so terrible, would have on us. I did not know what to say, so prayed him civilly to proceed.

‘You may well be pained,’ he continued, though it must be said that I don’t think we were at all, ‘but you will rejoice to hear that these things will not continue long. I have here a goad which will soon drive these dull-witted cattle back to the right path.’

So saying he laid his hand on a bundle of manuscript, which we knew only too well, and leaning fondly over it read slowly, as though it were a sweetmeat in his mouth, the title-leaf at the top. Its name was in Greek, not because the work was written in that tongue, but merely out of a fashion used commonly amongst such men to increase their appearance of wisdom.

‘It is a work,’ the good old man said,—we had heard it a score of times before,—‘upon which I am labouring, entituled, “*Ἡ Ἀριστοτέλεια Ἀπολογία* ; or, *Ramus Ransacked*, being a British Blast against Gaulish Gabies, wherein all the preposterous, fantastical opinions of late grown current amongst the Dunces of Paris are fully set forth, withstood, and refuted by Christoph: Follet.” It begins with a sharp note against——’

‘But, please you, sir,’ Harry interrupted,—and I was glad he did, for I saw the old man was running out of his course, as he always did when he got astride his ‘Apology,’—‘were it not well first to show us how the knowledge of this New World, of which we were asking you, had so set things awry?’

‘Knowledge of the New World, say you?’ said our tutor, evidently a little pained. ‘Know, my boys, there is no knowledge of this pretended New World. No man can know what does not exist: the New World does not exist, *ergo*, no man hath knowledge of it.’

‘Far be it from me to dispute your syllogism,’ said I, for logic was his chief delight to teach us, ‘yet, saving your premises, I have many times spoken with them that have been there and seen it.’

‘My boy, my boy,’ answered Mr. Follet sadly, ‘in what a perilous case do I find you! What hope can I have of your scholarship if you will set the eyes of moderns against the wits of the ancients? How can they have seen this New World of which they are so ready to prate? Had it existed, Aristotle would have written of it. Forget you for how many years, and for how many and great sages, the whole sum of human understanding has been contained within the compass of the writings of that great man, and will you seek to increase it by the babbling of drunken sailors?’

‘But, please you,’ said Harry, ‘the honest mariners who told me were not drunk.’

‘The greater liars they, then,’ answered Mr. Follet, a little testily. ‘Or rather, I should say, the more pitiable their ignorance; for let me not be carried beyond good manners, which are a sweet seasoning of scholarship too often forgotten nowadays in the dishes men compound of their wits.’

‘Save you sir, for that most excellent conceited

figure,' said Harry gravely; for the mad knave always knew how to bring his tutor back to a fair ambling pace when he grew restive.

'Well, lad, indeed I think it was not amiss,' answered Mr. Follet, with a complacent smile. 'It is an indifferent pretty trick I have, and one I could doubtless in some measure rear in you; but not if you suffer the vulgar to plant weeds in the gardens I am tilling with such labour, that I may in due course see you both bring forth a plenteous crop of the fruits of scholarship. If you have a desire to make yourself learned in cosmography, I myself, who have no small skill in it, will teach you. But listen no more to idle sailors' tales, whose only guide is experience, wherewith they foolishly seek to explain the hidden wonders of the world, seeing they have no skill to learn the truth from books.'

'Is it Aristotle, then, alone we must read?' asked Harry, a little disheartened at the prospect before us.

'I will not say that,' answered our tutor. 'Though for the wise the Stagirite is all-sufficient, yet it cannot be denied but that there be some authors who, having reverently and afar-off walked in the footsteps of the master, have in a manner amplified, extended, and explained, and as it were diluted his vast learning, so as to make it more palatable, medicinable, and digestible to the unlearned, such as you and Jasper. Therefore, because of your weakness, I would suffer you to read the works of Strabo, Seneca, and Claudius Ptolemæus, amongst the ancients; and among the moderns, the *Speculum*

Naturale of Vicenzius Bellovacensis, the *Liber Cosmographicus de Natura Locorum* of Albertus Magnus, together with certain works of our own Roger Bacon ; but these with circumspection, and under my guidance, seeing he was a speculator who erred not from too little boldness, or too great respect for Aristotle.’

With this we had to rest content, though I think Harry found little comfort in it, seeing that his love for books was never so great as mine. As for me, I laid aside my *Plutarch*, and devoured greedily all my tutor advised. Nor did I stop there ; for, rummaging in the library at home, I found other works on cosmography, such as the *Imago Mundi* of Honoré d’Autun, and that of Cardinal Alliacus, together with not a few others which some abbot of the later times had collected, being, as I imagine, interested in the science.

In these I read constantly, and carried what I found there to Mr. Drake and his boys, and my friends amongst the sailors. Hour by hour I told them of the dread ocean, where was eternal night, with storms that never ceased ; of the magic island of Antilia or Atlantis ; of the marvellous hill in Trapobana, which had the property of drawing the nails from a ship which sailed near it, and so wrecking it ; and, above all, of the Earthly Paradise, of which I loved best to muse.

Again and again I poured into their wondering ears the tale of that blessed land which lay beyond the Indies, the first region of the East, where the world begins and heaven and earth are hand in hand ; the land where is raised on high a sanctuary which mortals may

not enter, and which everlasting bars of fire have closed since he who first sinned was driven forth. I told them of the wonders of that land ; how in it there was neither heat nor cold, and four great rivers went forth to fill the place with all manner of sweetness and water the Wood of Life, the tree whereof if any man eat the fruit he shall continue for everlasting and unchanged.

Some laughed at me, saying I was blinded by too much book-learning, but most of the mariners, and especially Drake's boys, listened with great respect, caring little, as I think, after the manner of seafaring folk, whether the tales they heard were true or not, so long as they were strange.

CHAPTER IV

So passed by the full days of my boyhood ; I living, as I have said, chiefly at Ashted in Harry Waldyve's company.

It was not alone in devouring grammar, and such dry bones of cosmography as Mr. Follet allowed us to pick, that our time was spent. Sir Fulke was not a man to keep boys wholly to such work. Although he had managed to acquire some show of skill in theology when King Henry brought it into fashion at Court, yet even that I soon saw had fallen into sad confusion in his mind, and in no sense was he a scholar.

Yet in all such pastimes and pleasant labours as are used in open places and the daylight, which in respect of peace or war are not only comely and decent, but also very necessary for a courtly gentleman to use—in these he still showed the remains of his former high skill, or at least a happy trick of imparting to us his great knowledge of their mysteries.

Almost every day he would have us out and exercise us under his own eye at riding, running at the ring and tilt, and in playing with weapons, being especially careful of our fence with the sword and spiked target.

Like his master King Henry, he had a great love and skill for using the bow. This he taught us to use, and less willingly also the harquebuss.

We had little time for the sea—an element, as my guardian was wont to say, which sorted less with what pertained to a gentleman than the land. Yet he did not forbid it, and whenever he went up to the Court, which was not seldom, we laid aside awhile our courtly exercises, and were continually amongst the marshes and Saltings with Mr. Drake's boys, 'Isti dracones horrendi,' as Mr. Follet was wont to ease his mind by calling them.

After Sir Fulke's returns from Court it was always our scholarship that had the upper hand. For he was wise enough to see how things were changing at Court, and came back overflowing with praises of the young Queen's beauty and learning.

'Slight, lads,' he would say, 'she puts you both to shame, and goes beyond all young gentlemen of her time in the excellency of her learning. I tell you it is a sight to make England weep for joy to see her stand up, so fair and courteous, and make her speech in Latin, or French; or Spanish, or Italian, to the jabbering foreigners that come. And as for the Greek; why, Mr. Roger Ascham tells me she reads more of it with him in a day at Windsor than any prebendary of the church doth Latin in a week; he should know, seeing he had the setting forward of all her most excellent gifts of learning.'

'Then must we be double courtiers, sir,' said Harry,

‘and court learning and the Queen as well, if we want to keep the Court, or the Queen shall have but half-courtiers.’

‘Half-courtiers or double courtiers,’ said Sir Fulke, ‘I know that he who is out of learning will soon find himself out of Court.’

‘Then is he in an evil case,’ laughed Harry, ‘for he that is out of Court is out of his suit, and he that is out of his suit shall be shamed unless he quickly suit himself with another. Come, Jasper, let us get Mr. Follet to make us breeches to go to Court with.’

And away he would run to his work, while Sir Fulke laughed at his boy’s trick of turning words upside down. For he soon got the ways of that tripping wit which, it must be said, has since come to make far better passwords to places at Court than ever a hard-witted scholar could learn, did he read twice as much Greek as Mr. Ascham himself.

I say not this in envy, though I was too hard-witted ever to come by the trick. Harry’s gifts were dearer to me than my own, and, God knows, I loved him for them, and never in my life envied him anything, except once, but for the present time let that pass.

Some three years after my father’s death thus passed away before the sad day came when Harry and I were forced to separate, since our paths led diversely. It was high time that I should go to Cambridge, according to my father’s wish. Sir Fulke’s faith in scholarship was not large enough for him to suffer Harry to do the like. For him a place was found in the household of that

most godly and warlike nobleman, Sir Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, who was godfather to Frank Drake, since his renowned father, the first earl, being very earnest for the Reformation party, had been a good friend of Mr. Drake's when he lived at Tavistock.

Since my father's death I had known no day so sad as that on which I took my departure for Cambridge in company with Mr. Follet, who at my charges was to install me safely in Trinity College.

Harry rode with us as far as Gravesend, where we were to take the river for London. Mr. Drake, too, joined us at Rochester, and, riding by my side on his shaggy cob, beguiled the way with much good advice as to how I should bear myself at the University.

'I am, in a great measure,' said he, 'out of my former opinion against your becoming a scholar, not only because of the excellent parts I can see in you, which it were a sin to swathe in a napkin, but also because you will find that certain stout hearts amongst the godly, to whom I have written concerning you, are fast getting the upper hand at Cambridge. So that, I doubt not, you shall find yourself set amongst many goodly plants, with whom you shall grow to bear fruit medicinal for the purging away of all the clogging papistical humours that still be left to fester in the stomach of Reformation.'

'He were but a bitter tree,' laughed Harry, 'did he bear but purges.'

'A most wrong conclusion, my malapert Hal,' answered Mr. Drake; 'for your bitter pill is a sovereign

sweetening of the inwards; and you shall find, moreover, that much fruit which grows at Court, though sweet in the mouth, is, for the most part, most bitter in the belly.'

'Then,' cried Harry, 'have I learnt a most notable piece of science, and can henceforth tell why courtiers' tongues are sweet and scholars' bitter. Still, I will be a courtier with a tongue tuned to sweet courtesy, and leave bitter railing to scholars.'

'Go, thou madcap,' chuckled Mr. Drake, whom Harry could never offend; 'go cry "Words, come and play with me," for surely thou wast born their play-fellow.'

Mr. Drake then fell to tell me, as he had a score of times before, that Trinity was the worthiest college in England, since it was that which his good friend, the renowned Earl of Bedford, had chosen for Frank's god-father, Lord Russell.

So largely did he speak of this and of the shining light that the young Earl had proved himself there, that his talk carried us all the way to Gravesend, where, most sadly, we bade adieu to him and Harry. As the strong flowing tide carried us up the beautiful Thames my spirits grew lighter; for I was not without comfort to soften the grief of my first parting with my brother.

As I never attained to his wit and skill in courtly exercises, being in no way apt thereto either by birth or nature, so I may say, since all men know it, in things pertaining to scholarship he was but a child beside me.

I know not if I was unduly proud of all I had attained to under Mr. Follet's guidance, yet of a surety I know he was unduly proud to bring me to Cambridge.

'Were it not unworthy of a scholar, Jasper,' said the worthy man, as we sat in the tilt-boat that was carrying us to London, 'I could bring my heart to envy you the many and great delights that await you whither we are going. Most profitably have you attended to my precepts, and eschewing the light of experience, by which the vulgar walk, have trusted to books, which are the only true guide. Such well-fashioned vessels as I have made you it is now again the delight of *Alma Mater* to fill with her choicest nectar.'

'Did she, then, once choose other vessels?' asked I.

'Alas, dear discipulus, yes,' answered Mr. Follet, with a little flush on his wan cheek; 'and then it was that I was cast forth. It was when those Elysian days, whereof the memory is a sweet savour to me still, were ended—the days when it was my happy fortune to find a place amongst that unmatched garland of fellows and scholars with which Dr. Medcalfe crowned St. John's College when he was Master, and afterwards when I was chosen out to be a most unworthy member of the new-founded house of Trinity. It was an honour I had little hoped to win; for (not to speak too much, because of the love I still bear to my old and dear college) this royal Trinity which our glorious King Henry founded, that *colonia* of St. John's, that *matre pulchra filia pulchrior*, to which you, I hope most humbly and reverently, are about to belong, I hold, above all foundations,

learned or unlearned, that the world has ever seen, to be the most noble, princely, and magnificent.'

'What made you, then, leave so honourable a state?' asked I as he paused, as if lost in musing on the glories of our college.

'That is soon told,' said he sadly. 'The days I speak of ended with the most precious life of our scholar king. It was there, if I may make free with the fine figure of my most worthy friend, Mr. Roger Ascham, that the Hog of Rome passed over the seas into that most fair garden of Cambridge, and set to to root out the fair plants that were growing there, and tread them under his cloven feet. Then the blighting breath of idolatry carried seeds of tares thither, which, taking root, thrrove most rankly amidst the pollution that beast had made, till ignorance choked out scholarship, and I fled.'

'Surely, sir,' said I, for much talk with Mr. Drake had increased the hot opinions that were born in me; 'surely the breath of the beast of Rome is no better than the vapours from the mouth of hell.'

'Soft and fair, Jasper,' said the old scholar, 'soft and fair. Such words sit ill on a scholar's lips. Carry not the rancour of these present times into the holy shrine whither you go. The memory of the ruin that befell that fair-built fabric did somewhat carry me beyond the terms of good manners. Do not you follow me. As you love learning, help to guard the doors of yonder dear place against the savage turmoil of these shifting times.'

'Must a scholar, then,' said I, 'forget his religion and what he owes to his God?'

‘No, not that, lad,’ answered Mr. Follet, looking a little pained. ‘Your most glorious college was, under the king’s grace, as its charter recites, divinely appointed for the purpose of bringing the pure truth of Christianity into the realm, and repelling the nefarious and enormous abuses of the Roman papacy.’

‘Then will I strive,’ said I, ‘with my college to do what King Henry said.’

‘That is well, lad,’ answered my poor tutor, without losing his troubled look. ‘Still there is no need to forget your scholarship in doing parson’s work. By learning shall you withstand Rome more than by controversy and railing. Love a scholar when you meet him, though he hate not Rome. Love him for his learning’s sake, and forget Rome. Such was the way in the old days, when good Dr. Medcalfe was Master of St. John’s.’

I saw how pained he was to think that the cargo he had laden with such care might be wrecked on the stormy seas which he could perceive ahead. So I said no more then, but contented myself with watching the multitudes of swans that came about us and the shipping which we passed, and with asking a hundred questions about the towns and villages on the banks, as well as of the great city which lay before, till by dark our sturdy rowers ceased their work at Paul’s Chain, and we landed.

We lay but one night in London, and came to Cambridge on the fourth day. There Mr. Follet at once carried me to Dr. Beaumont, that I might be entered at Trinity.

The Doctor, as I must call him, though at that time

he was only admitted B.D., was a man of about forty years of age, of good breeding and presence. In my eyes he seemed a very great person indeed, and my respect for good Mr. Follet was never so great as when I saw with what honour and affection the Master of Trinity received him.

‘I have brought you a scholar, Beaumont,’ said Mr. Follet, after very hearty commendations had passed between them, ‘after my own heart; one who has imbibed the true principles of Aristotle, and is untainted with any new empiric heresy. I have taught him well in our own faith—to love learning, and despise experience as the common school-house of fools.’

‘Ah, Follet,’ said Dr. Beaumont, laying his hand on my tutor’s shoulder fondly, and speaking to him smilingly, as though he had been a child, ‘happy are you to have kept your scholarship so pure. Let us hope your scholar will do no worse, though, God knows, these are tainting times, and Cambridge grows so full of railing that ere long, I think, there will be no room left for the gentle disputations of scholars.’

With that he dismissed us to his brother, Mr. John Beaumont, the Vice-Master, who showed me where my lodging was to be in King’s Hall, not far from the great gateway of King Edward.

How proud I felt as I sat that afternoon looking out upon the little court, for that was before Dr. Neville had pulled down the old buildings to make the present great court, which is now the envy of every college in Europe!

Cambridge seemed to me a hall of Paradise, and Trinity its daïs. In spite of what Dr. Beaumont had said, I looked forward to dwelling in it as in a realm where the pure quintessence of learning should reign over a quiet band of brothers, who in the impassive contemplation of wisdom should have lost all hate, and fear, and sorrow.

Suddenly my meditation was disturbed by a loud shout, and I saw a number of students surge tumultuously out of an archway into the court. In their midst was an effigy with an ox's skull for a head, clearly made to counterfeit the devil. This they had clothed in a surplice, and crowned with a square cap.

It seemed to delight them beyond measure; for while one held the thing the rest danced round it, laughing and shouting, and singing ribald verselets against it. Gradually they drew near the window of one of the fellows, named Saunderson, who was University Reader in Logic, and fell to crying, 'Fasting Johnnie, Fasting Johnnie, come and welcome your master, who is here to speak with you.'

Therewith Mr. Saunderson ran at them with a cudgel, but they drove him back, so that he could not come at the devil in the surplice.

By this time the uproar had brought a number of students to the gate, and Mr. Saunderson, seeing amongst them a number of King's College men, cried out, 'To me, to me, all lovers of the old faith, and stay this sacrilege.'

There was a rush from the gate at the effigy in

answer to his call, and in a few moments I could see my college was being worsted. That was enough for me in the first blush of my pride, and, without thinking, I rushed down and out into the court, just in time to seize the effigy as it was being carried out of the gate.

What followed beyond a wild turmoil, in which I was fighting like the Drake boys themselves, I cannot say, but soon I knew I was standing in the midst of the court with the tattered effigy in my hands and my fellow-students shouting round me as if their lungs must burst.

At every pause in their shouting I could hear the voices of the Vice-Master and Mr. Saunderson railing at each other in a corner of the court with such good will, that every moment I thought it would come to blows.

I was feeling very proud of what I had done, though scarcely knew in the din what to do next, when all at once I saw a grave-looking young man standing in the gateway, which was now shut, and by his side my poor tutor looking at me as though his heart would break.

Then at last it burst upon me what I had done. At one blow the fair fabric I had raised in my day-dreams, the oft-repeated resolution to lead the life of pure scholarship, to soar impassive on the wings of science above the little turmoils of the world—at one blow it was all gone. Ere one sun had set upon my new life I was the hero of a vulgar broil.

In an agony of shame I cast down the detested cause of my grief, and, breaking passionately through the

excited throng, fled to my rooms from the reproachful, heart-rending gaze of poor Mr. Follet.

With my head buried in my arms I sat for some minutes sobbing in black despair at my table, when, as I thought, I heard him open my door and come towards me; but the step was young, firm, and resolute, as unlike as it could be to my dear old tutor's shuffle. A strong hand was laid gently on my shoulder, and I heard a deep, full-toned voice speaking to me.

'Be of good heart, Mr. Festing,' it said; 'I know why you weep, and had I not long ago hardened my heart to the battle, I could weep with you.'

I looked up, and saw the same gentleman who had been standing with my tutor in the gateway. He was a somewhat ungainly, ill-favoured young man of some eight and twenty summers, but yet I felt drawn to him, as much by reason of his kindly words as of a look there was in his face of fearless resolution, and pure-strained intellect, which a certain aspect of weary melancholy softened into what was to me a most sweet and lovable expression.

'I am Mr. Thomas Cartwright,' he went on, still looking sorrowfully upon me, 'new-made major-fellow of Trinity, with whom you are to share this lodging. I have brought this about by the kindness of the Master, because Mr. Drake had written to me concerning you, with very hearty commendations.'

'Are you a friend of Mr. Drake's, then?' asked I, feeling greatly comforted.

'Yes, Mr. Festing,' answered he; 'and also of that

most high-wrought scholar, Mr. Follet. I know more of you than you know of me, and I know why you grieve. It is not hidden from me that you were minded to make sacrifice to the Lord of the good parts He has given you, and by long hours of patient study to make them worthy His acceptance. Yet rejoice that He has shown you at your very going forth what His will is with you. Rejoice that we can say this day, as surely as Samuel did to Saul, that He has appointed you to go up with us against the Amalekites and destroy them utterly. Such is His will ; and while men hearkened to Him the strong tide of Reformation flowed on in full flood under His mighty breath, till its living waters bid fair to fill the length and breadth of Christendom with their cleansing sweetness. But men wearied of the work, and spared the best of the sheep, and of the oxen, and of the fatlings, and of the lambs, and destroyed them not. And now the Lord's ears are vexed with the bleating of the sheep and the lowing of the oxen amongst the people. He turns His face from them, and the tide is fast running back. Rise up, then, and do the work of the Lord. Think not of the treasure you have been laying up for Him ; for, behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams !'

'Must I then abandon all scholarship,' I asked when he had finished, 'to join in the din of these bitter controversies?'

'What could the son of Nicholas Festing wish for better?' Mr. Cartwright replied. 'For what you call

bitter controversy is battle under the banner of the Lord of Hosts against the Amalekite. Moreover, you need not lay aside scholarship, but you must labour thereat, even as I have done, to make of it a weapon wherewith at last you shall hew Agag in pieces before the Lord.'

With such words he encouraged me not only then, but daily, till ere a term was half over I was as hot a young Puritan as any in Cambridge. I cannot blame myself that I so quickly made surrender to that remarkable young man, whom St. John's and my college were bidding against each other to possess, and who has since made so great a stir in England, becoming the very head and heart of the Puritan party.

I had not even good Mr. Follet's influence to help me, for he left Cambridge a few days after to take up his place as tutor to Harry and one or two other young gentlemen about the Court, to whom he had been commended by his good friend Mr. Ascham, a man who at that time was the very oracle of the nobility on all such matters.

I was glad enough my tutor was spared any further sight of the ill-conditioned state of his university, and, above all, the hornets' nest which I soon found my unhappy exploit had stirred up.

It was some days after his departure that I was sitting at the window of my lodging pretending to read, but in truth listening to the Vice-Master and Mr. Cartwright, who were talking over Mr. Saunderson's recent expulsion from his fellowship.

‘And how think you the Vice-Chancellor will take it?’ said Mr. Cartwright thoughtfully.

‘Who cares how?’ said Mr. Beaumont hotly. ‘Who cares what a Romish mule like Baker thinks? If he cannot stomach it, so much the worse for his Cretan belly.’

‘And yet I think he is like to take some order in the matter,’ said Mr. Cartwright, ‘seeing how sturdy a papist Saunderson was.’

‘Doubt not he will talk big enough,’ answered the Vice-Master. ‘He thinks because he is Provost of King’s he can lift up his head over Trinity men. Yet let him beware, or he shall find that Pharaoh will lift up the head of the King’s Baker from off his shoulders, and good Protestant fowls shall eat the flesh from off him. And besides, what order can he take? For if we cannot expel a fellow for observing fasts and particular days, not to speak of using allegory and citing Plato when publicly discoursing on the Scriptures, we may just as well write ourselves heathen idolaters and Italian atheists at once.’

At this moment I heard the tramp of armed men below the window, and, looking out, I perceived the Proctor with the beadles and his watch in the court below halting at our staircase. At that time the Proctor’s watch always went at night harnessed with good morions and corselets, for fear of the Mayor’s constable and his men, but it was not common to see them so by day.

Mr. Proctor demanded admittance in the Vice-

Chancellor's name, and therewith entered the room with the headles and two halberdiers, whose bright armour seemed strangely out of place in our dim and dusty lodging.

'I arrest you, John Beaumont,' said the Proctor, 'for brawling and other offences against the peace and dignity of our Lady the Queen and this University.'

'At whose suit?' asked the Vice-Master.

'At Mr. Saunderson's,' he answered. 'Here is the warrant; I pray you come peaceably.'

'Oh, I will come gladly enough!' said Mr. Beaumont, 'if it were only to enjoy the discomfiture it will bring the King's Baker when Sir William Cecil hears of it. Thank God, we have a Chancellor who knows my brother and me for true men, and can make a traitor's ears tingle—ay, and his back too. Let my brother know all, Mr. Cartwright, and pray him write without delay to Sir William.'

The Proctor looked a little troubled at the mention of the great Secretary of State, but still he performed his task, and our Vice-Master was conducted to prison. And there indeed he lay till an answer came down from Sir William, with such a stinging reprimand for Dr. Baker that he was glad enough to release Mr. Beaumont and eat his humble pie, thanking God it was no worse.

Were I to speak at greater length of Cambridge as it was at that time, I should have little else to tell save ringing the changes on what happened to me in the first week of residence. Factions and contentions were our only occupation; and while the seniors quarrelled

the students brawled, and grew daily more inordinate and contemptuous of rules for their orderly governance, as well in behaviour as in religion.

As for learning, it was only part and parcel with our manners. Our only philosophy was controversy concerning the ordinances of the English Church; while in grammar we studied nothing so much as how to rail in Ciceronian Latin,—and cunning professors we had, at least for the railing.

Sharing Mr. Cartwright's lodging, I was more fortunate than most. Though very earnest in the controversies, he would not neglect his scholarship nor mine. Every morning he rose between three and four, not allowing himself more than five hours' sleep, whatever happened. I rose with him, out of my love of him and learning; and pushing my trundle-bed under his standing bedstead, to make room for my stool beside him, read with him out of the books we loved so well till nigh ten o'clock, when dinner was served in the Hall.

After that the disputations in the schools began, which I always attended with him, being proud to carry the books of the most brilliant scholar and popular orator in Cambridge.

Between that and supper-time I exercised my body, as I had promised Sir Fulke, chiefly in the fencing-school. For there was newly come to Cambridge at that time an Italian master of fence, to whom all the best gentlemen in the University resorted to learn the new foining rapier play, to the great discomfiture of the

teachers of sword and buckler. Moreover, I rode out continually to the artillery butts or the Gog-Magog hills, till Mr. Cartwright persuaded me to abandon the evil company that gathered there daily for pastime.

So things went with me and the University, till in the summer of the year of grace 1564 a great and notable thing for us came to pass.

CHAPTER V

It was after half one day, in the middle of July, that Mr. Cartwright came up to me with the great news.

‘Our time has come at last, Jasper,’ said he; ‘this day the Vice-Chancellor has received a letter from Mr. Secretary with very sharp orders for the burying of our differences, seeing that the Queen’s grace will make progress here early in August.’

‘That is news indeed,’ said I; ‘will there not be great things done for her entertainment?’

‘That is the way my content lies,’ answered Mr. Cartwright, radiant. ‘There will be disputations, great disputations, where we shall pour into her gracious ear the true wisdom of Reformation, and refute our back-sliding, halting adversaries.’

‘But it is always said,’ I replied, ‘that the Queen clings to ceremonies and superstitions.’

‘So she does,’ he said, ‘and were it not that that godly man, Lord Robert Dudley, is ever at her side, things might go harder with the faithful than they do.’

‘Truly,’ said I, ‘our High Steward is very earnest for the truth, but how shall we prevail with her better than he?’

‘God will give us strength, and words, and wisdom,’ he answered excitedly. ‘I shall stand forth in His might at the great disputation, and speak words of fire that the Lord shall whisper in my ears. She shall listen and know it is the word of God that she hears ; and lo ! she shall go forth from Cambridge henceforth thrice blessed, to search out and destroy utterly throughout the length and breadth of the land all that the people have disobediently saved from the destruction of Amalek.’

‘But will she surely hearken ?’ I said, half pitying and half fearing to see him lifting up his voice like one of the prophets.

‘Ay, lad !’ he cried, growing more and more excited, ‘I know she will. She is young and good and wise. She has been surrounded by evil councillors, but the Lord has bidden me go cry to her, that she may see the way of England’s, ay, and the world’s, salvation.’

It was not until the day after the Queen arrived, when she rode out of her lodgings at King’s to visit the colleges, that my eyes were gladdened with the sight of that most sublime Princess.

I took my stand in Trinity, near the door of the hall, to see her ride into it. I shall never forget that sight as she passed on erect upon her horse, in a black velvet gown and hat. It was before the present monstrous fashions had come into use, and her costume so set off the brilliancy of her complexion and the ruddy glow of her hair that she looked radiant as a goddess in the joy of her reception, and the full flush and beauty of youthful womanhood.

As she rode on into the hall I fell upon my knees to worship what seemed to me, who had never spoken to and hardly seen a beautiful woman before, the most lovely sight my eyes had ever beheld.

With all my lungs I shouted 'Vivat Regina Divina.' She heard my cry and smiled down upon me, and I, poor soul, like I know not how many more beside me that day, rose up over ears in love with my Queen.

And why should I not? Could a gentleman have a more worthy love? Some speak of her littlenesses, and mumble over her womanly faults. I, for one, will not listen to them. I did not see them. I worshipped what I saw. What that was all men know.

What witnesses could I call in her defence were she arraigned before a Court of Perfect Womanhood! And those not her own subjects either—it is only natural that they should praise—but foreigners, as any may know who have heard, as I have, Signor Giordano Bruno, the wisest of all who in my time have travelled hither, and my good friend, exhaust his surpassing eloquence in praising her.

'I hold her,' so I have heard him say, 'for a princess without peer or rival, a woman so gifted and favoured of Heaven, that whether for heroism or learning or sagacity, no soldier, or lawyer, or statesman in her kingdom is her equal. I tell you that the wisdom, the dignity, the statesmanship, the wit, the beauty of that most royal lady has won her a throne upon the steps of which must humbly take their place, Semiramis, Dido, Cleopatra, and all princesses of whom the world has boasted

hitherto. See where she sits upon her lofty seat, with the eyes of Christendom fixed upon her in astonishment and admiration, wondering to see how, in her beauty and dignity, as by the mere force that shines from her glorious face, she kept back from her beloved kingdom for well-nigh thirty years the storm that surged and roared upon the face of Europe ; and, when at last it burst in frantic fury on your shores, hurled it back with one majestic sweep of her arm, and bound it down once more to receive what it was her will to send.'

Happy, happy for the world if thou, my peerless Queen, like the new sun-goddess Aphrodité that thou art, shouldst open thy girdle till it embraced not only England and Ireland, but the whole globe. Then under thy benignant universal rule it should deserve the title thou hast won for thine own realm amongst the wisest of other lands ; then should it be named, as they have named England, 'the pattern of perfect monarchy,' *'domicilium quietatis et humanitatis.'*

Such, at any rate, was Cambridge while the sun stayed with us ; and such indeed was England by the side of other realms. So completely did the fair flowers of scholarship which blossomed in the sunbeams of her presence obscure the thorns beneath, that Cambridge indeed appeared the garden of learning that she thought it.

It was a sight I am proud to have seen when she sat in great St. Mary's Church beneath her canopy, with the Doctors and Bachelors in due order around her upon the great stage that had been erected there for the disputations.

‘Surely it is a second Sheba,’ whispered Mr. Cartwright to me, as I stood by his side with the books he required for setting forth his arguments. ‘She has come from the South to hear the wisdom of Heaven. Pray God he may give me this day some shred of the spirit of Solomon.’

‘Would God, sir,’ said I, ‘you might turn her heart, though I fear the ungodly have sorely hardened it.’

‘Why do you say that?’ asked he.

‘Did she not last night,’ I answered, ‘listen to a play of Plautus in King’s Chapel after evening prayer, and did they not use the rood-loft as a gallery for her women?’

‘Better use it for that,’ said Mr. Cartwright, ‘than for the lewd mockery of God they hold there daily. What wonder the poor Queen is led astray in that pestilent slough of Papacy where she lodges. But peace now, for the Proctor calls on the Respondent to begin the act.’

Mr. Thomas Byng of Peterhouse set forth the questions of the philosophy act. They were two, namely, ‘Monarchy is the best form of government;’ and secondly, ‘The constant changing of the laws is dangerous.’

When his oration was finished the masters who were called to the disputation came forward. Mr. Cartwright’s opponent in this was Mr. Thomas Preston of King’s, a man of very goodly presence and sufficient wit, though more fit for a courtier than a scholar, and at heart little better Reformation man than the rest of the King’s fellows.

He made a speech well wrought enough, and de-

livered with courtly gesture, and very trippingly, to the great pleasure of the Queen. Yet for fire, learning, persuasion, and all that pertains to true rhetoric and philosophy, it was, to my mind, but the chatter of a jay beside my Mr. Cartwright's speaking.

I could see the Queen was well pleased with what he said. It was like being in paradise with the angels for me to watch her beautiful face, wherein was delicately mirrored all the subtle perceiving qualities of her most polished mind, as each was stirred by the magic of my master's tongue.

As I look back to it now it seems to me like the shining surface of some tropic lake, wherein the great soul of God, that dwells in the trees and flowers and vines, is mirrored each moment more gloriously as the soft breath of heaven from time to time breaks up the reflected image.

I dwell on this because some have said, most wantonly, that Mr. Cartwright was so vexed at the favour the Queen afterwards showed to Mr. Preston that he thenceforward became a bitter enemy of the church she loved. I say it is a wanton lie to speak so. My master was too great a soul to harbour such littleness. His hatred of prelacy and superstitious forms was of older and firmer standing than that. If at that time he changed at all in opinion, it was that he saw too well there was no hope of winning the Queen, and that it was to Parliament and the people he must henceforth look.

He was very silent as we left the church, and in

spite of all I could say concerning the Queen's plain pleasure in his speech, I could see the melancholy of his face grow deeper and its resolution sterner. I know that he saw at once that he had failed, and perceived clearly before him the long life of toil and pain and bitterness through which he was thenceforth to fight his way.

I was very glad that evening as we sat together gloomily in our lodging to hear a knocking at the door. I went to open it, and found there a gentleman of the Court, tall of stature, but so wrapped in his cloak and shaded by a large Spanish hat that I could not tell who it was.

'Is Mr. Cartwright within?' said the gentleman.

'Would you have speech with him?' asked I.

'Yes, and alone,' answered the gentleman. I knew not what to do, but Mr. Cartwright, who had started up at the sound of the stranger's voice, cried out at once to me that I should go.

I went out straightway to King's College to see the seniors and Court ladies go in to the play of *Dido*, which was being presented there that night, wherein Mr. Thomas Preston was playing a chief part.

In an hour's time I returned, but hearing voices still within my lodging, waited outside, where a lamp swung over the door. Very soon the voices ceased, and the gentleman came out. He seemed so occupied with his recent talk with Mr. Cartwright that he took no pains to conceal his face, and as he passed out by the lamp I could see it was none other than Lord Robert Dudley.

'What said Lord Robert about it?' I asked when I

went in, thinking he had certainly come from the Queen to speak with my master about his oration.

‘How knew you it was Lord Robert?’ said he quickly.

‘I saw his face by the lamp-light,’ said I, surprised at his sharpness.

‘Then tell no man what you saw,’ he answered. He was silent a moment, and then, as though he thought best to tell me more, since I knew so much, or perhaps for very longing to speak with some one, he went on.

‘He came not to speak of the oration,’ said he, ‘but of deeper matters, of things which nearly concern our Reformation. God grant he be a true man!’

‘But is he not surely a true friend of ours?’ I asked.

‘I know not, lad, I know not,’ he said. ‘He speaks fair enough, but I doubt there is too much wind under his cap for us to count too much on his steadfastness. Still, better a popinjay at Court than no friend at all. Things look black indeed if all he says be true. God knows what counsel is being breathed in the Queen’s ears, but ’tis certain her right hand is held out to Spain. Since peace was made with France, I thought there would be leisure for England to complete the good work within herself; but now this dallying with Spain and the woman of Scotland of which I hear may mar all, and we perhaps shall have to fight the fight again. Heaven send these piracies—of which Mr. Drake writes to us, and of which Lord Robert speaks—may by God’s help prosper, till they make a breach between His

people and the spawn of antichrist, such as no Queen or King or embassy can heal.'

It surprised me to hear so godly a man as Mr. Cartwright speak of Heaven prospering piracy, but I was wont to believe all he said was right, and held my peace. He went on then to tell me how earnest her Majesty was that Lord Robert should marry the Queen of Scots, and how well she had received the new Spanish ambassador at Richmond, and many other evil signs.

'But surely, sir,' said I, 'in this she deserves the praise of our party, seeing that if the Queen of Scots had so godly a husband as our High Steward, all practices against the cause in Scotland would end, and a true succession be assured.'

'Speak not of it, lad,' Mr. Cartwright replied. 'It is but cozening of the Lord to dally thus with antichrist. England must have no part with the accursed thing. Rome and Reformation, there are these two, and no other; and we must choose between them. Pray, lad, and watch and toil by night and day, by thought and deed, that the choice may be the right. Above all, pray, as I have ever bid you, that we may see the Queen speedily matched to some godly Protestant lord, so that, being blessed with issue, she may keep the succession clear from all fear of Romish taint. Wrestle, lad, with the Lord for that. It is the only hope and safeguard of Reformation in England.'

He uttered no more than we all thought then from the wisest and most wide-seeing to the most ignorant and bigoted. He, I think, saw it more plainly than

many, and during the rest of the Queen's visit we spoke of little but these things, till I fully shared his thought that the tide of Rome, which had begun to flow again, and had already covered so many fair Protestant provinces, was setting hard towards England; and each morn and night my prayers went up with those of all our party, and many a one beside, that the Queen might soon be wed.

So moved was I by all this talk that I could take but little note of the disputations, plays, and pageants with which my university entertained the Queen, the more so as Mr. Cartwright took no more part in them. Still, I saw her every day, and dreamed of her every night, feeling I loved her more and more for the dangers that surrounded her, and that I would spare not even my life to ward her from her enemies.

On the 10th of August, after a morning shower of degrees upon all the Court, the Queen left Cambridge, and I not long afterwards, being troubled with an ague, went home to Longdene.

CHAPTER VI

‘HAIL! man of learning,’ cried Harry to me, as the day after my coming home I rode up to Ashtead. He was standing at the gate about to mount his horse as though for a journey. He had grown a man since I saw him, and looked handsomer and happier than I had ever seen him.

‘Hail! man of courts and camps,’ I cried him back, ‘whither away so fast?’

‘No whither, lad,’ said he, ‘since you are come, and whither I was going I will not tell you, till I hear first where your life-blood has gone. Slight, man, you look as pale and dry as a love-lorn stock-fish. What ails you?’

‘Nought but a piece of an ague,’ said I, feeling the sight of him like medicine to me, ‘and perhaps a surfeit of weary wits.’

‘Well, save us from universities, then,’ answered he. ‘Courts and camps have their dangers, they say, but, fore heaven, I think your college is a very Castle Perilous beside them!’

‘How will you make that good, most sapient brother?’

‘Nay, the maxim is good already, without my making. For, look you, in camp a man shall lose at most his life, and at Court his heart ; but your college puts his spirits in danger, and to be spiritless is worse a thousand times than to be dead or even in love.’

‘Well, I think you may be right, and in any case have enough spirits to share with me.’

‘Nay, if you want spirits, come with me whither I was going, and I will show you a man who has enough to set a whole graveyard singing.’

‘Why, ’tis a very resurrection of spirits. Come, tell me who is your miracle man?’

‘Who is he? Why, who should he be but that man of men, that prince of good companions, Frank Drake?’

‘Nay, then I am for you ; if it were only to keep peace amongst my members. For my ears have had so much of him that I think my eyes are like to fall out with them from pure jealousy.’

‘Well, ’tis a bargain, then ; and we both go a-fishing with him in his bark.’

‘In his bark? Is he then master already?’

‘Ay, that he is. Old Master Death mastered his old master, and now he is his own master and his bark’s too. For he got that by the old dog’s will.’

‘Well, I am right glad to hear it. But tell me, is he all his brothers say?’

‘And more, and more, and more again! Why, man, he is my own Lord of Bedford with a Will Somers rolled into him, and who could be more of a man than that? But we can talk of this as we go along. First come

within and see my father, while Lashmer gives your horse a bite, that we may ride forward.'

Lashmer, I had better say here, was son to Miles, my steward. He rode with me on this day, and henceforth became my body-servant and most trusty and trusted follower. He was a broad-faced, red-haired lad, but not very hard-featured, though his face was just of that honest Kentish sort that made one feel compelled to laugh by the mere looking at it.

Sir Fulke greeted me boisterously, as usual, with a hearty welcome well peppered with oaths, which, I must say, burnt my palate more than they used to.

'Art going fishing with Harry?' said my guardian, when our greeting was done.

'Yes, sir,' cried Harry; 'we are going to catch Spanish mackerel.'

They both laughed heartily at this, I knew not why; but not having heard of such a fish as he named, I thought it was a jest of Harry's which my scholar's wits were too hard to see.

'Have you brought your snappers with you?' asked Harry.

'Yes,' said I; 'a pretty case of short ones that were my father's, since Miles said the roads were far from safe. But will you shoot these fish?'

'No, lad,' said Harry, and he and Sir Fulke both seemed to be strangling another laugh; 'but, as you say, one meets fellow-travellers now whom it is well to treat at a distance, so every gentleman rides with a brace of dags or so in his saddle.'

‘Blame yourselves for it,’ said Sir Fulke. ‘For since your new Reformation men have sent fish out of fashion, in spite of all Mr. Secretary can do with his acts and ordinances, fishermen have to fish ashore. The hundred of Hoo swarms with such folk, so that a man may hardly come to Gravesend in safety. There is never a lane in Kent which some of the valiant lubbers will not drag once in a week for any fin that’s stirring. God knows what will become of the sea-service if gentlemen do not set the fashion for fishing again,’ and therewith the old knight chuckled again till his face was redder than a doughty turkey-cock’s.

‘Come, let us away,’ said Harry, ‘or Frank Drake will have a rod for me. He is testy as the devil if a man be late.’

‘What!’ said I, ‘will he not bide a gentleman’s time?’

‘Wait till you see him,’ answered Harry. ‘The sea, in Frank’s company, is a mighty leveller of gentility. Here, take this ; we shall be out all night.’

So saying, he tossed me a cloak, and we set out.

The way proved all too short, so much had we to tell each other. Harry was overflowing with the delights of the Court. He seemed able to talk for ever on the pageants and masques, in which, to my sorrow, he had taken a great share ; for at Cambridge the men of our party began to look askance at such vanities.

It pleased me better to hear him speak of the grace and beauty of the Court ladies, who seemed to have been very kind to him. He spoke of them in a tone of

chivalrous rapture, which made me sometimes long to have his gifts, that I too might please women, and know how to speak with them, and be thought worthy to be their squire. But I tried hard, when he spoke of such things with kindling eyes, to crush my chivalry, having well learnt my lesson that this, too, was a carnal vanity.

Above all, he praised the Queen as one that shone like a ruby amongst pearls, and there I suffered myself to join his song. I think he was as much in love with her as I.

Next to the Queen he spoke most of a little girl, called Anne St. John, who, from what he said, seemed rather his tyrant than his playfellow. She was ever with the Earl, either at Russell House or at Woburn, being a niece of the good Countess Margaret, his beloved wife, who died soon after Harry joined the Earl's household. My lord found great comfort, Harry said, in the child's pretty ways as much as in her beauty, for she had ruddy hair and deep brown eyes, like the Queen.

She was moreover much beloved by her cousins, the Earl's daughters, so that it came about that Harry saw her every day, and became her playfellow and willing servant. He made me laugh to hear him speak of her tyrannous ways and her jealousy.

'I know not what kind of woman she will grow,' he said; 'but now she is the sweetest toy a man could want, and wayward as a haggard. Yet my lord will often curb her in his dry, merry way, and she will be as

thoughtful after it as a little Solomon. Were her pretty spirit in a colt I would not care to have his breaking ; yet I think that any life which my lord will take in hand will never grow awry.'

So he fell to speaking of his lord, Sir Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford, to whom he seemed as devoted as ever I was to Mr. Cartwright ; above all, when he followed him to the north, on his being named Governor of Berwick and Warden of the East Marches, and saw how great a statesman and soldier he was.

'Truly,' said he, 'may I count myself fortunate in thus being able to go in the train of so famous a captain to the best school of arms in the country, as Berwick is held to be, not only because of the passages of arms that continually take place on the Border, but also by reason of the number of skilled and veteran soldiers that are gathered there.'

'Then you had a plenitude of professors,' said I.

'Ay, and a plenitude of practice too,' he answered ; 'and that in all military sciences. For my lord's first care was to increase the strength of the defences of the place. So I saw all that craft, besides gunnery and weapon exercise, both in play and earnest. Furthermore, my lord took me for secretary when he rode during the summer with Sir John Foster to settle the limits of the marches, and there I learned much of the conduct of military councils and affairs, together with many other things that a prudent soldier should know and be silent about. Certes, I think I have as much valiant scholarship in six months as many come by in six years.'

‘And no wonder,’ said I, ‘with such a godly and warlike tutor.’

‘Ay,’ cried Harry, with enthusiasm, ‘he is a very pattern of all valour, piety, and gentleness, and rightly called “the mirror of true honour and Christian nobility.”’

Indeed, I think he was right. For surely never was royal gift more wisely disposed than the wealth with which King Henry endowed Lord Russell and his father. Would God the whole of what he stripped from the monasteries had fallen into no worse vessels than those two! What a pattern of reformation, then, might England indeed have been to all the world, lifted far above the reach of even Papist sneer and cavil,—in very deed *domicilium quietatis et humanitatis*!

I could fully share Harry’s regret when he told me that he had left Berwick for good and all. But it was needful that he should be a short time with his father before setting forth on his travels into France and Italy—a course which the Earl had himself strongly urged, as being most necessary for the perfect shaping of a gentleman and the building up of a full-grown manhood, wherein, he held, there was no such hindrance either in court or camp or council as in youth to have known no travel.

Talking thus together of the two years in which we had both passed into the dawn of manhood amidst such different scenes, we came to Rochester, where we left our horses in Lashmer’s charge and took the boat, which two of Mr. Drake’s boys had brought for Harry.

It made a man of me again to be once more on the

river, though I did not like to see Harry whisper to the two Drakes and see them nod and grin in reply. But I soon forgot this in chatting, as we did, chiefly of Frank and his boat.

‘Look there!’ cried the boys at last. ‘Was ever such a dainty?’

I looked and saw a smart-looking craft, such as is used in the Zeeland trade, but in better trim than most, lying at moorings close to Mr. Drake’s hulk.

The boys gave us a lusty cheer as we ran alongside their home and I sprang on deck. Mr. Drake embraced me with such fervour and smell of tar that I was well-nigh undone, but John and Joseph tore me from him, crying, ‘Come and see Frank, come and see Frank!’

Seizing each an arm, they dragged me to the cabin under the poop, where for the first time I saw that prince of captains, Francis Drake.

Ah! how my heart is lifted up when I think of that September afternoon; when I contemplate the condition of two men that day about to enter into a life-long struggle which was to glitter with the most glorious deeds the world has seen: the one a plain rough mariner, in his coarse sailor’s slops, sitting in a dingy cabin, intent on a rude map of the Indies, the meanest ship-master of an island queen; the other an emperor in purple and gold, seated on the loftiest throne in Europe, the most powerful monarch in the world, with the crowns of six kingdoms clustered on his brow, and the gold of two worlds pouring into his lap; —the one surrounded by rude fisher lads; the other

surfeited with the homage of the most skilful captains, the proudest nobles, the most cunning councillors these modern times have bred.

Surely no more notable example of God's power to humble pride and reward wickedness has ever been seen. Little could I guess then what his lot was to be, though when I looked on the man I might have known there was no task too great for Francis Drake to achieve.

God never made a man, I think, more fitted for the work he was set to do. His stature was low, but though he was then not past twenty years old, his deep broad chest and massive limbs showed the strength that was to be his. His head well matched his body, being hard-looking and round and most pleasant to look on, because of the bright brown locks that curled thick and close all over it, and the round blue eyes that shone full and clear and steadfast from under his thick arched brows. His mouth, which was already slightly fringed with a light-coloured beard, was of a piece with the rest, wide and good-humoured, with full, well-formed, mobile lips, such as we look for in an orator, and withal firm and self-reliant. His colour, moreover, was fresh and fair, as of a man whom no sickness could take hold of; and his whole aspect so well-favoured and full of cheerful resolution as I could not wonder made his family set him up to be their idol.

'I am very glad to see you, Mr. Festing,' said he, rising up as I entered and holding out his hand very frankly. 'I am glad you are come. We want strong

hands for our fishing. Jack has told me what kind of blow you can strike.' .

'But I have only a scholar's arm now,' I said. 'Once I could pull an oar and tally on a drag-net indifferently well, but I doubt study has softened me.'

Arching his eyebrows still more, he looked at me with that expression which I grew to know so well, and which as much as anything, I think, made him the master of men he was. It was a look half inquisitive, half astonished, yet wholly good-humoured. It seemed to wonder if a man could be so foolish as to try to deceive or thwart him, and to be ready to laugh at the folly of such an attempt rather than to resent it. Though there was plainly something in my speech he did not understand, yet he was soon satisfied, and burst out into a boisterous laugh.

'Fore God,' said he, 'you are a merry wag,' and then laughed on so heartily that no man could help taking the fever, and I laughed too, though I knew no better than the stern-post where the jest was.

'Yes, you may laugh,' said Mr. Drake, who had joined us. 'Frank knows how to fish, so do my boys. They will catch you now bigger fish than any man's sons in all Kent.'

'Where is James?' asked I, not seeing Mr. Drake's fourth son. 'Will he not go with us?'

'Peace,' said Harry, as the preacher turned away, and the laughter was hushed. 'Don't you know?'

'Let me tell him,' said Frank Drake, looking so stern as almost to seem another man. 'You must know, Mr.

Festing, nigh a year ago he was 'prenticed in a ship that traded to Spain. We have no certain news of her, but very ugly tidings of what befell a crew that sailed in her company.'

'What tidings were those?' asked I.

'Come away,' said Frank; 'dad forbids us to speak of it. "Avenge it, if you will," says he, "but speak not of it."'

We went apart, and he told me one of those stories of which my ears were soon but too well filled: of a ship's crew seized in a remote port of Spain, and on pretext of some unruly conduct of one or two half-drunken men ashore, first thrown into prison, and then handed over to the officers of the Inquisition.

'Such, we fear, is Jim's fate,' said Drake, as he ended his story. 'It is most like he lies rotting now with his shipmates in some filthy dungeon, if worse has not befallen him at the hands of those hell-hounds. But come, let us not think of it. The tide has turned, and it is time we were away.'

We were soon aboard Frank Drake's boat, which was called the *Gazehound*. I could not help seeing how trim she was from stem to stern compared with other such craft engaged in the French and Zeeland trade. Nor could I but wonder at the ready despatch with which Frank's crew obeyed his orders. Indeed, we were hardly aboard a minute before we were running fast towards the sea, with a gentle breeze behind us, and the wicked river rushing recklessly along with us.

I know not whether it was some inward warning

that made the Medway look so dark and cruel as it curled about our sides, or whether it was the effect on my worn brain of Frank Drake's fearful tale, which he told with fierce earnestness. Yet as the misty darkness deepened and the low waste of marsh on either hand began to be lost in the night, a sort of horror came over me, perhaps a part of my ague. It seemed that we, the river and ourselves, were rushing wildly on to some deed that we must hide from heaven. The curdling river seemed some huge snake, for whose help we had sold our souls. Rejoicing at its work and the folly of its dupe, it seemed to hiss in low laughter like a fiend's about us.

I turned from where I looked over the side to break the spell. Harry and all the boys, with one or two of the crew, were gathered aft around Frank as he sat tiller in hand. I could see them all by the light of the lantern we carried. Frank was telling them another hideous story of Spanish treachery and cruelty to English mariners who had come to trade in the Canaries.

His wide blue eyes were flashing in the excitement of his tale, and Harry and the Drake boys were no less excited than he. Even then I could see he had that wonderful gift of words by which afterwards at his will he could always raise or calm a storm amongst his followers.

Still the night deepened and the river grew darker and more devilish, as hand in hand with it we sped on through the darkness to our work. The flickering lantern cast strange lights and shadows upon the little

group at the stern, till they seemed to be rather like some foul spirits than my good friends.

They cried to me to join them, but I said I was weary with a headache because of my sickness, and would sleep. I crept in then below the foredeck, and lay down upon a sail. There was something beneath it which made it an uneasy bed. I raised the canvas to see what it might be, and beheld some half-dozen long-bows, quite new, and several sheaves of arrows. I think my sleep would have been easier had I not sought to remove the cause of my uneasiness.

For now I began to guess the meaning of all the jests I had heard, and questioned Harry when soon after he came to lie beside me.

‘What fish, Harry,’ I asked, ‘is this that you bring me to catch with pistols and long-bows?’

‘A fish that swims from Antwerp,’ answered Harry, laughing. ‘Wait and you shall see, if we have luck or judgment.’

There was little laughter in me as I lay there in the dim lantern light, with the sound of the wicked river whispering temptation in my ear. Was it that which seemed to take from me the power to rebuke in him what seemed to me no less than sin; or was it shame lest he should think that Cambridge had so softened and unmanned me that I no longer would follow wherever he led?

Harry must be right, thought I, and Frank Drake too! It must be right, yet would God I were in my trundle bed at Mr. Cartwright’s side again! Surely

Cambridge was sorely changing me. The great struggle of my life had begun, though I knew it not; the strife for the mastery of me between the inward man-made life of scholarship and vain hurry after God, and the strong, pure, out-o'-door life of England that God Himself had given me for my birthday gift.

Who shall say which is best? Not I, now I am old; but then, as I lay there beside Harry, in my vanity and blindness I said to myself: 'Surely his life is not of God; it is mine that is from heaven, the search after wisdom, the merciless war for truth, the exalting of the spirit and abasement of the body.'

My lips were trembling with a prayer that he might be turned and grow like me, but then I opened my eyes to look at him through the dim lantern light, and my prayer died unborn. Surely that gently-breathing figure, lying so calm and careless there in all its manly beauty, surely that must be all God's work, and what came of it His work as well.

So let me cease to resist, and let the hissing river hurry me on wheresoever it will with him.

CHAPTER VII

It was John Drake's rough voice that aroused me, as the soft morning light glimmered into the cabin where I had been sleeping.

'Rise quickly,' said he; 'the fish is in sight, and Frank says you must bear a hand, as it is a big one.'

So great was that extraordinary man's hold already on me that it never once seemed strange that I should receive orders from him thus. I rose quickly, and buckled on my sword and pistols, well knowing what was coming.

I was not at all surprised to see Harry standing, bow in hand, by Frank, and all the rest armed with bows and pikes.

'Good-morrow, Mr. Festing,' cried Drake. 'Heaven has sent the Antwerpens fortune to-day. Ere another hour or so they will be spared all further trouble for their cargo. See where she lies.'

It was a lovely misty morning, such as one can only see in the Channel on a sunny autumn day. Nothing was in sight but the shadowy form of a good-sized caravel on our larboard bow, heavily laden, and toiling at a snail's pace across our course.

As we drew nearer I could make out that she was at least twice, perhaps three times, our size, though I could see but few men on board her. Still my heart began to beat heavily.

‘Steady now, lads,’ cried Drake, as some of his brothers began to show signs of excitement; ‘steady, or we shall get never a bite. Get up on the forecastle, Jack, and mend a bit of net; and do you, Mr. Waldyve, carol us out a French ditty for a bait. And, look you, not a glint and glimmer of weapon.’

Thus, with nothing to show we were not an ordinary French fishing-boat, we bore towards the caravel so as to pass close under her stern to windward. They, seeing our purpose, and fearing some ill-dealing, no doubt, since those waters were even then winning an evil name, hailed us.

Still we held on without answer, till they hailed again, asking what countrymen we were.

‘Now for an English greeting!’ cried Drake. ‘It would be less than courtesy not to let them know our country since they ask so fairly.’

The words were hardly out of his mouth when our bows twanged and a little cloud of arrows swept over the caravel. With loud derisive cries our crew fitted fresh shafts. Thick and fast they flew, till the crew of the caravel dared not show themselves on deck. Every man hurried below to shelter himself, except him who was at the helm. Bravely he held on in spite of our shafts, till, with a shudder, I saw an arrow strike him under the arm. With a low cry he fell on his face across the tiller.

The caravel hove up into the wind, and I saw the steersman turned helplessly head over ears as the helm swung round—a sickening sight to see.

‘Save you for a pretty tumbler!’ cried Joe Drake, and all the rest but Frank and Harry laughed loud.

‘Steady, lads, steady,’ said, he; ‘look to your pikes, and gentlemen to their swords, or we shall some of us laugh the wrong side.’

As we fell aboard of her I drew my rapier. I can say without pride I was by this time no mean fencer, though a bungler beside Harry; yet so strange did my blade seem, now that for the first time I drew it in earnest, that I felt as though I had never handled one before.

Still, there was no time to think. Frank Drake sprang aboard, Harry after him, I after Harry. No sooner did our feet touch the deck than out of the after-cabin burst a half-dressed cavalier, rapier in hand. Some nine or ten men were at his back, armed with swords and daggers.

With a loud cry they ran upon us, the gentleman straight at me. He seemed mad with fury, for he made no shift to fence, more than to rush on with uplifted blade as though straightway to *arrebatar* with a wiping sweep, after the method of Carranza. I did but offer him my point *di intrare*, and he spitted himself or ever he came within his proportion. It was but murder. God forgive me for it when His will is! It made me sick to see my rapier half-hidden in his breast,

as his sword-arm dropped, and for a moment he stood gnashing his teeth before he fell backward.

I shut my eyes as the blade drew hard from the wound, and reeled against the bulwarks, feeling dizzy with horror and my sickness. When I opened my eyes again it was well-nigh all over. For, save for two of his servants, no one resisted after the gentleman fell. The rest were poor Dutch mariners who cared little who had the cargo they carried, so long as they kept their skins whole.

The serving-men were quickly overpowered, and the rest of the crew driven within the forecastle. Then Harry came up and slapped me on the back.

'Well done, Jasper,' he said. 'Slight, it was a pretty thrust, a most scholarly *imbroccata*. Would that Sir Fulke had been here to see what his errant disciple can do! Perhaps he would rail less at your Italian bodkin-play, and would say, I doubt not, that they can teach something beside Latins at Trinity. But what is it, man? You look as if the blade were through you instead of him.'

'Hush, Harry!' I said. 'For God's sake, look to him, for I dare not.'

'Poor lad!' answered my dear brother, who could always feel for me far more than for himself, 'you are too sick for this bloody work. I will do as you bid, though there is little hope for him.'

But there was no need, for as I turned to look upon my work again, I saw Frank Drake leaning over the bleeding Spaniard, and, as tenderly as a woman, trying to staunch the wound.

It filled me with new wonder and love for this man to see how his fierce courage melted to gentleness as soon as the danger was over. I marvelled, too, to see how apt he was at surgery even then, though he had not yet attained to that great skill which afterwards he made it his duty to acquire.

It seemed to make war wondrous gentle to see him, and I was better able to give my help. We soon disposed the wounded man more easily, and went to minister to the helmsman, but, alas! he was stone dead.

Meanwhile the others had bound the crew, and Frank Drake set about questioning them. I don't know whether it made any difference to him, but he was most instant to find out if the cargo were Spanish owned.

While we were thus engaged there was a sudden cry of a sail in sight. Looking up, I could see a tall ship looming through the silver mist, and bearing down straight for us.

'Stand by to cast off, lads,' cried Frank, cool and decided, 'till we see what she is.'

We were all on board the *Gazehound* in a minute, and sat breathlessly waiting to see what our unwelcome neighbour might be.

Slowly she came down upon us before the gentle breeze, looking so beautiful in the morning sun that I could hardly believe that she might contain a pirate's death for us all. The strain would have been more than I could have borne had it not been that my senses seemed dulled with horror of my deed.

Afterwards I thought it strange that no one had

urged Drake to let go the prize and run for it ; but then all seemed to think that the course he had made up his mind to was the only one possible.

Nearer and nearer she drew, till the mist, which was very thick close down on the water and had till now hidden her hull, cleared a little, and we could see, I at least with sinking heart, the sunlight sparkle on the ordnance which protruded from her lofty forecastle, like the teeth of some savage hound.

‘Culverins!’ whispered Harry to me. ‘They have point-blank range of five hundred paces, and we are within that of her already. There is no running now, whatever befalls. Heaven send she is a Queen’s ship, and no Spaniard.’

‘What matters which,’ said I, ‘if we are pirates? You know well what grievous complaints they say the Spanish ambassador has made, and what orders the Queen has given the navy.’

‘Well, wait a little. See the trumpets on the poop ; they are going to hail us.’

On she came, a glorious sight, with the sun glowing on her bulging sails and the perfect lines of her hull, that swept so gracefully from towering poop to lofty forecastle.

Suddenly, as she drew level with us, her trumpets blared forth a loud flourish that rolled merrily away over the misty sea. The boatswain’s pipe chirped out, and we could see the sailors stand by to go about.

Again the trumpets brayed a fuller call, and then a mass of red and gold aloft unfolded itself with royal

languor, till there flashed in the sunlight, plain to see, the beautiful banner of our island Queen.

A lusty cheer from all our crew greeted the welcome flag. As it died away we could hear the captain of the Queen's ship hailing us to know who we were, and what we did.

'The *Gazehound* of Chatham — Master Drake,' shouted Frank, springing on the poop,—and then, after a pause, 'aiding a Spanish caravel in distress.'

We could hear a roar of laughter on board the ship at his words, and the captain's voice came rolling back:

'Well met, Master Drake, and a fair voyage.'

We gave her another cheer as we saw her keep on her course. She answered us with her hautboys and other music, which we listened to till it grew faint in the offing, and we were left alone to do our will upon our prize and prisoners.

As we watched her sail away so gallantly, with her gay streamers and gilded poop glittering like some tropic bird in the sun, I asked Drake what she was.

'I know her well enough,' said he, 'but we ask not the names of Queen's ships that find us at this work. Yet I will tell you. It is the *Minion*, and Captain David Carlet is in command of her. He is bound for Guinea with the *John Baptist* and *Merline*, both of London, so I know. They are going to try if they cannot draw a little for the Queen out of the Portugal's wells, like Mr. John Hawkins. Good luck go with them; but now we must to work.'

After what I had seen of Drake's dealing with the cavalier I had so grievously hurt, I had no fear that the crew of the caravel would suffer at his hands any great cruelty, such as I had heard less noble spirits had inflicted in the fury of their revenge against the Inquisition.

I went aboard the prize with the rest when Drake gave the order to rummage the cargo. We found that it consisted chiefly of silks and woollen goods. A few more inquiries soon showed us that they were Spanish owned, and, further, that the cavalier was a gentleman returning from secret service in the Netherlands to Spain.

We quickly then completed our work. It was only to set some of the cargo on board the *Gazehound* in order to lighten the caravel enough to allow of her being run into Otterham Channel, one of those lonely tortuous inlets amongst the Saltings in the mouth of the Medway which we had all known so well since boyhood.

As soon as it was done Drake bade his brother and me carry the *Gazehound* back to Rochester, while he and Harry, with half our crew, and some of the Netherlanders who were freed for the work, made sail in the caravel to the spot whither he intended to take her.

So we parted company, and I with my charge came safely on the next morning's tide to our moorings.

The Spanish bales we stowed on board Mr. Drake's hulk. He was not at home, purposely, as I could not

help thinking, to ease his conscience, if indeed our piracy went in any way against it.

Only poor Mrs. Drake was there, trying vainly to get her youngest boy away from the taffrail, outside of which he was recklessly climbing at the risk of a sudden grave in the rushing tide. She looked more wan and weary than ever when she saw what our cargo was, and soon seized an occasion to draw me into the cabin for a little comfort.

‘Mr. Festing,’ she said piteously, ‘for God’s sake, sir, stop them from this bloody work. They will die in a halter, every one of them. God pardon me for not bearing His punishment without complaint, but what sinful woman was ever chastised with twelve such rods? See, there is blood on your own doublet! Shun this sin, Mr. Festing, for sin it is. How will God ever give us back our dear James if we break His law daily thus? Surely he has been taken in judgment for his and his brothers’ wickedness. Frank is as bad as the rest, and leads them on to it. But vengeance is the Lord’s, Master Jasper, and not for preachers’ sons, for all that men cry out about spoiling the Egyptians.’

I tried hard to comfort the poor woman, feeling deeply for her. I could pity her the more heartily in her misery at the little care or kindness her sons showed for her, seeing I knew what it was to crave unsatisfied for a mother’s love.

She had often come to me thus for comfort; yet I never found it a harder task than now, not only because of my own sense of sin, but also from my difficulty in

understanding what she felt. At one moment she spoke of her boys as an infliction of Heaven ; at another she seemed in terror that she should lose them ; nor could I be sure whether her hatred of piracy came from a tenderness for them or the laws.

I could only tell her how I had been drawn into it unawares, and would do all I could to turn them from further crime.

‘God bless you for your words, Master Jasper,’ she said. ‘What should I do if I lost my boys? I see them o’ nights dangling in halters, and sometimes again lying in blood with Spanish blades at their hearts. Then I wake and pray God for comfort, till I sleep again ; yet I only rise on the morrow to hear more talk of fights, and Spaniards, and wild work.’

‘Surely,’ said I, ‘God has set them apart for some notable work in His service, seeing how they prosper in what they do.’

‘Maybe, maybe,’ the poor woman answered. ‘Yet more times I think it is the devil and not God who is their master ; think of it, Master Jasper, twelve of them, and not one a godly preacher like their father. What will God say to me for that? It was my hope and comfort when little Willie came, bless his sweet heart, that he would be my own boy, and God’s, till he fell in with the old sword-hilt, and loved it just like all the rest of them ; and played all day with it like the others, and grew as heady and masterful as the worst of them.’

‘Well, Mrs. Drake,’ said I, ‘I am as earnest as you

to turn them to a better path. You and I must try, under God; yet, in truth, I know not which way to start.'

'Will you not go to the Earl of Bedford?' she said eagerly. 'Did he hear what his godson did, I *know* he would stretch out his hand, and the Lord would prosper him. Truly, I thought when godly young Master Russell, as he was then, held my pretty curly-pated Frank at his baptism, that he would prove the firstfruits of a vineyard that should be savoury in the nostrils of the Lord. But He punished my pride, and lo! my vine bore nothing but thistles. Still, go to him, Master Jasper, and he will save them.'

'But my lord is far away in Berwick,' said I, 'where I cannot reach him.'

'Then write to him letters,' she answered, 'or go inform Sir Fulke how they deal with his boy. He is a Justice, and will tell the Queen, and stop this ungodly breaking of the laws.'

I think this plan had come into my mind before; yet I had driven it away as one that sorted ill with my honour, and fearing to get the Drakes and Harry into some trouble. Now it looked less evil to me; for I think this poor weary mother had somewhat unmanned me. Without promising I said I would do all in my power, which seemed greatly to comfort her.

So I took my leave, and coming by boat to Rochester, where I found Lashmer, rode gloomily towards Longdene, much pondering what way my duty lay.

By the time I reached the place where the roads to

Longdene and Ashtead parted, I had made up my mind, as I knew from the first I should. The Puritan party at Cambridge was already growing marvellously grim-minded. There had been many who muttered secretly against the masques and comedies with which the university had entertained the Queen, and in many other things Mr. Cartwright and his friends, of whom I was one of the most loyal and devoted, began to show a growing faith in all that made life hard and mournful, no less than an ever-waxing mistrust of whatever was easy and pleasant.

Tried by this terrible test, my true duty, as I thought, was easy to see. I had an inborn English horror of tale-bearing. Here, then, was an occasion to wound the carnal scruple. I had a love for Harry that was the one bright light in my life, I had an admiration and belief in him that fed my hunger for guidance to a noble life. Here, then, was a time in which I might humble my earthly idol in the dust.

Poor lad, poor lad ! I can look back now from the quiet spot whither God has led me, and see my youth as something apart from me. I can pity it now, ay, and grieve for it too, seeing that I know how many at this very hour are torturing themselves, even as did that youth, that was I, long ago.

When will one arise with tongue and pen of flame to show them what they do, that men may cease to mar what God in His wisdom and goodness has made so fair ? Why will ye be so doting, good people ? What blindness has seized you, so that you cannot understand the

gift of life that He has given you? It is hard, I know, to fathom all its depths, and fully understand the voice with which it speaks to you; yet treat it not, therefore, like some poor, mad thing that must be laid by the heels and scourged and starved, till it grow so foul and ill-favoured that even the angels, who weep for the folly of mankind, shall turn from it with loathing.

But I may not rail at you, for I was no wiser as I rode that night up to Ashtead. I had started late from Rochester, and it had been dark an hour or more before I saw the crowded turrets and gables of my guardian's house faintly outlined against the starlit sky.

When I drew rein at the foot of the gentle slope upon which the manor-house stood, I could hear the sound of many horses entering the gate above. It seemed strange to me that so large a company should be coming there at so late an hour, but I soon saw the cause.

As I entered the gate some serving-men were setting torches in the sconces round the court, and my bewildered eyes saw their lurid light fall on a whole train of packhorses which almost filled the place.

Frank Drake together with some of his brothers and Harry were moving busily and silently amongst them. They had plainly just come in, and were setting about unloading the packs as though they had no spare time on their hands. Sir Fulke was standing on the steps of the hall looking at the busy scene below him.

‘Who’s there?’ cried he, suddenly catching sight of Lashmer and me dimly in the gateway. ‘Where the devil is John Porter? Harry, quick to the gate; there are strangers!’

Frank Drake and Harry whipped out their swords in a trice and sprang towards me.

‘Stand!’ they cried together. ‘Who are you?’

‘A friend!’ cried I, riding out into the light and springing from my horse.

‘Mass!’ said Drake, ‘but I thought you were some of those rake-hells from Hoo that had got wind of our luck and wanted to cut a slice for themselves. Is my *Gazchound* safe?’

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘safe at her moorings, and the cargo in the hold of the hulk. And how fares it with the Don?’

‘As well as man may,’ answered Drake, ‘with a hole such as you whipped through him. He lives; but no more.’

‘Thank God for your care of him, Mr. Drake,’ said I. ‘But tell me now, what means all this hubbub?’

‘Why,’ answered Harry, ‘only that our work took longer than yours, and had to be set about more secretly. Come and help unload the silk.’

‘What!’ cried I, aghast; ‘the stolen cargo here?’

‘*Blanda verba, blanda verba*, my scholar,’ said Harry. ‘Our prize of war, you would say. Of course it is; and where could it be safer than in the cellars of the gentleman adventurer who fitted out the craft that captured it?’

‘Surely you jest,’ said I.

‘Nay, I jest not,’ answered Harry; ‘it is plain open-air truth, and yet withal so good a jest as to want no bettering at my hands.’

‘I can see no jest in it at all,’ said I.

‘I know it well enough, lad,’ cried Harry, putting his arm through mine in his old loving way. ‘Many do not see it at first, but they come to it soon. You learn the lesson quick enough on the Scotch marches; but I could see you were so be-Cambridged that, if I told you all, you would never join the sport. You shall pardon me; for, in truth, I could not rest till I had uncolleged you a little.’

‘You know well, dear lad,’ said I, for I could never resist him, for all my stern resolves, ‘there is nothing I cannot forgive you. Yet, I pray you, bear with me a little now, for I think my sickness comes over me again, and I would go within and rest.’

‘Right willingly,’ said he. ‘Sir Fulke will see you lodged; for I must make another journey to Otterham Quay ere the sun is up, to bring on what is left of the caravel’s cargo.’

So I left him and went within to sleep a fevered, troubled sleep, in which I saw the wounded cavalier grinning upon my sword again, till he sprang at last from off it, and, seizing Harry and the Drakes, swung them up on gibbets in a long ghastly row, while Mrs. Drake cried to me, who could not move, to save them.

CHAPTER VIII

ON the morrow, as I walked in the orchard after dinner with Frank Drake and Harry, for the rest were gone, I took occasion to inquire what they thought of piracy ; for our adventure, and especially my own part in it, weighed no less heavily on my mind for my night's rest.

'That was a shrewd thrust of yours, Mr. Festing,' said Drake, as our talk turned, naturally enough, on our adventure. 'But for you we might have had ugly work. I give you good thanks for it, and all the honour ; ay, and if I had my way you should have the lion's share of the booty too.'

'Have my thanks, Mr. Drake,' said I, 'for your good words. Yet think me not churlish if I say they might be better bestowed. As for the thrust, it was none, for the Don spitted himself ; as for the honour, let us talk of that when there is any in such work ; and as for the booty, I will have none of it.'

'Your reasons, Mr. Festing, your reasons?' said Drake good-humouredly.

'For the honour,' answered I, 'it is a thing which I hold pirates have little part in ; for the booty, I care not to share with water-thieves.'

He turned sharp on me then and stopped in his walk with a flush in his face, looking hard at me with that strange, honest, searching look of his. I was ready to bite my tongue out ; for I saw in a moment that my hot words had seared the unsullied spirit of a man whom nothing would bend to an act which he thought base, a man in all ways nobler than myself. God knows, I thought him wrong, and thought he led Harry wrong, but now I would have given half I had to have chosen kindlier words to say my say.

‘You use hard words, and wrong ones too, Mr. Festing, saving your scholarship,’ said Drake at last, proud as a Spaniard. ‘I am no water-thief or pirate either. I shall tell you what a pirate is, not to speak more of water-thieves, which is a hard word that breaks no more bones than another. By the most ancient customs of the sea, sir, whereof be it your excuse that you are ignorant, a pirate is one who, without license from his prince or his prince’s officers, in time of peace or truce doth spoil or rob those which have peace or truce with him.’

‘Then how shall you justify yourself,’ I asked, too cowardly to yield to him, ‘seeing we have peace with Spain?’

‘Nay, but I say,’ he answered, ‘we have no peace with Spain, or truce either. Is it peace when they lay embargos on our ships, throw our mariners into prison, and burn and torture them in their streets? Is it peace when they shut our trade from their ports, and succour and defend our deadliest enemies?’

‘That was well, perhaps, months ago,’ said I, though it wanted all my courage to answer him, such force was in his eyes and voice, ‘but now truce is made, and prisoners are released, the embargo lifted, and King Philip’s ambassador received at Court.’

‘And how call you that truce?’ he asked. ‘They brand us heretics and Lutheran dogs, with whom they say openly no faith is to be kept; no mariner is safe from their rake-hell Inquisition in any port of Spain; they send a spy, whom they call ambassador, to search out the weakness and plot with the traitors of the land and practise on our poor young Queen, that they may bring on us again the curse of Rome, as they did in Mary’s time. Call you that truce? Call it rather war, and worse than war, for it is dastards’ warfare? Philip may cry truce to Bess, and Bess to Philip, but between the people of Spain and England there is, nor shall be, neither peace nor truce till one of us is crushed.’

‘Yet if all were as you say,’ I persisted, more faintly now, for there was that in the man which no one could withstand when he was moved thus, ‘if there be neither peace nor truce, you have no license from the Queen. Nor even her goodwill, since you must know what urgent orders she has issued against adventurers like yourself.’

‘I know well enough,’ he answered. ‘For some reasons of state she has done this. Yet wait till you see the orders carried out, wait till you see such an adventurer punished, before you say I have not her license. Did you not see how the *Minion*, sailing under her

own royal flag, passed us by when we were at the work; and was it not one of her Justices in constant communication with the Council who fitted me out? Is not that license enough?’

‘Nay, then you accuse the Queen’s grace of bad faith to the Spaniard, and you are willing to abet her in her deceit.’

‘Faith to those that keep faith, say I. To every Spaniard, and not the least the Spanish ambassador, Don Guzman de Silva, she is a heretic with whom to break faith is the path to heaven. To such must a man give fair words, as the poor Queen does, till she grow great enough to strike them straight on the mouth, as, under God, by our help she shall. And were all I have said too little excuse for what we do, I have even a higher and greater license than all; for, as dad says, and all pious men beside, I have God’s own commission to prey on Antichrist and him who stands his champion, till the filthy breath of the beast shall cease to poison the earth. The Spaniard goes about to lead away the people after false gods and idolatry and superstition. Such men by the Word of God are worthy of death. Here in my Bible I hold license from the Great King to seek out and spoil and destroy His enemies. Shall I hold my hand so long as He shall prosper His servant? How are we to call that piracy and thieving which God has so clearly commanded?’

Then all at once came back to me Mr. Cartwright’s words, and how he spoke of these rovers as doing the Lord’s work and being prospered by Him. I do not

think it was that which overcame me, but rather Frank Drake's presence. The recalling of my master's words was but an excuse to myself for yielding.

'Mr. Drake, you have prevailed,' said I. 'I crave your pardon ; you are a better man than I, and a truer servant both to God and the Queen. Give me your pardon for my words ; they were uncourteous and unjust. Forget that they were spoken, and let my memory of them be my punishment.'

'Nay, it is you, sir,' said he, holding out his hand, 'it is you that have prevailed. I took you for a distempered, fastidious scholar, and now I know you for a true man. I desire your better acquaintance, Mr. Festing, and nothing better than that we may one day adventure together. At any rate, I trust that if you have a mind to it at any time, you will know where to look for a captain.'

'Ah,' said Harry, 'Jasper is more for stay-at-home book voyages than for a dainty feast of dry haberdine and "poor John" at sea ; for I think,' the foolish lad added, 'he knows every cosmography book that was ever wrote.'

'Say you so ?' cried Drake. 'Then I pray you lay in a victualling of apples, and we three will aboard the harbour and make a dry voyage together.'

So we did, and talked over Drake's map till sunset, of half-known worlds and unfurrowed seas, and all the wonders with which the learning of the ancients and the fancies of the moderns had peopled them.

I cannot say that from that moment I became Frank

Drake's friend, for he was ever as slow in making a friendship as he was in parting with one. Yet before he sailed again I may boast we began to be to one another what we continued till his death.

For in those days which followed we were always together, seeing that Harry had almost every day to ride forth with his father to bid farewell to some neighbour.

I had been much astonished at the learning Drake displayed in his first talk with me, and marvelled where a mariner could have gathered so great a store of knowledge. He had gladly assented when I bade him to Longdene, that we might study together the cosmography books that were in my library.

Day by day we pored together over their crabbed latinity, which I expounded for his better understanding, while he, as I could see by his shrewd questions and ruthless commentation, sucked the old pedants dry as herrings.

Ah! sweet bulky tomes, how dear is the sight of you to my declining years, since that renowned navigator deigned to ask wisdom of you! Well may you stand so proudly in your ranks, mounting guard, as it were, over yonder table whereon he read in you. Best beloved to me you are of all my books, yea, though I have around me the choicest flowers of wit and scholarship, which in these latter years have blossomed so bounteously under the glorious rays of our most royal sun.

Yes, you I love best; as much for the memory of my dear friend, which you enshrine, as for some mighty

power that seems to lie still behind your great leather covers. Who knows how much you told him that listened to your voice with such a wise discernment? Who knows how much of fame he owed to what you whispered in his ear, unheard by me? Ay, and who can even tell how many of these new dainty fruits our sun would have had power to ripen, if he, untaught by you, had not first so deeply stirred and tilled our fallow English wit with his heroic and inspiring deeds?

How large and fair a place those weeks hold in my memory! Had their sands run out less quickly, how great a sorrow I might have been spared! For I cannot doubt that had I spent a very little longer time with Frank Drake, he would have made of me, there and then, a sailor like himself, and I should never have gone back to Cambridge.

But the hours of our studies were numbered, and the day came at last when Harry must pass over to France in Drake's bark.

It was a parting of double sadness; for not only was I to lose my two friends, but one of them, he that I accounted my brother, was going to a far country, where I feared I should lose him, both body and soul.

For Harry, like most other young gentlemen in his case, had determined to pass into Italy—a country of which all our party had a most wholesome horror, not only as the very home and fount of papistry, but also because we held it no better than a foul Circean garden, full of all manner of enticements to pleasure and wantonness.

The proverb, by which the Italians themselves would make of every Italianate Englishman a fiend incarnate, was ever on our lips. I knew how hardly a man of Harry's kidney could escape unsullied, seeing how little love he had for learning, in pursuit of which it was pretended he should travel to Padua and elsewhere, and which alone could save a man from the Italian taint.

I perceived with great pain that since his return from Berwick Harry read nothing but the *Morte d'Arthur*, and such like wanton books of chivalry, wherein, as it seemed to me, those were accounted the noblest knights who slew most men for mere valour's sake, without any quarrel, and lived the most wanton lives.

I spoke long and earnestly to him on this, praying him rather to travel in Germany, and countries given up to God's true religion. He listened patiently, as he always did to my preaching, though I think he must have laughed in his sleeve, knowing how true and pure his heart was beside mine. Yet I could not turn him from his purpose, and had to bid him farewell with a sinking heart, which he tried to comfort by promising that for my sake, if for none other, he would come back unchanged.

After Harry's departure Sir Fulke was so lonely that he prayed me stay with him for a little space. And this I was glad enough to do, till letters came to me from Mr. Cartwright, wherein he told me of the growing heats of the controversies at Cambridge concerning conformity, and urged me to return to the

standard, which thing I did in the beginning of the year of grace 1565.

It is in no way my desire to overstrain patience by speaking of these matters, whereof so many have written at so great length, and better than I ; nor do I wish to speak much of my life, save in so far as it was wrapped in those of my two dear friends who were now beyond the seas, Frank Drake, on his return from France, having sailed under Captain Lovell on his disastrous voyage to the Indies.

Suffice it to say that I remained at Trinity, working diligently, under Mr. Cartwright's guidance, to perfect myself in all manner of scholarship, that I might render myself well practised in the use of the most lethal weapons which he could forge for me in regard to the then present controversies.

Every day they and I grew more heated. Conformity was openly condemned in Trinity, till at last Mr. Cartwright persuaded the whole college, save three, to cast off the garb of Antichrist, and appear in chapel without surplices.

It was a day of great rejoicing in my college, for we, setting far too high our importance, as is the wont of scholars in places where they are gathered together, deemed we had accomplished little less than a second Reformation. Yet all it brought about was so sound a rating from the Chancellor, in which he was pleased to call us 'bragging, brainless heads,' with other pretty conceits, that many were glad to disclaim their part in the matter and blame Mr. Cartwright ; so that, fearing

the further displeasure of Mr. Secretary, and urged thereto by his friends, my master left Cambridge and went abroad, whither I would gladly have followed him, but he would not have it so.

‘It were better,’ he said, ‘that you should abide here and take your degrees ; and, moreover, I desire to leave behind me in the University some true and understanding friend, who will keep me informed of all that passes here.’

Being very glad to take upon myself so honourable an office I did as he wished, and Mr. Cartwright’s encouragement to scholarship being thus withdrawn, my studies became almost entirely turned to theology, or rather to that unseemly scramble for scraps of divinity which passed for it in those days.

I was even appointed for a time to read the divinity lecture, as a gentleman reader without *stipendium*, and thus becoming always more fanatical, and being well known as being in Mr. Cartwright’s confidence, I grew to be a marked man in Trinity, and in due course was elected fellow, to my great content, though I had no intention of taking orders, being a violent opponent of conformity.

Those were great days for us in Trinity, for we had, what men love best, a perfect content in the sense of our own bigness, at least whenever our ears were not tingling with a rating from my Lord Burleigh, our chancellor. We went on our ways like prophets, blindly swelling out our littleness with the vain wind of our own babbling, till we seemed to ourselves to tower like a giant at the head of Reformation.

If any had told us then that Frank Drake, or even my Lord of Bedford, was doing more for the cause with his little finger than all our heads together, we should have laughed him to scorn. Yet now it is not clear to me that such a speech would not have had some show of reason.

In the year 1567 Dr. Beaumont died, to my great sorrow, and we had set over us in his place Dr. Whitgift, Master of Pembroke Hall and Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity. He was a man from whom we hoped much, seeing that to a good disposition towards the Puritan party, a hatred of vestments, and very sound Calvinistic doctrine, he added a greater force of scholarship and eloquence than Dr. Beaumont ever had, and moreover was a better courtier.

Indeed, I think Trinity could have had no better Master in those days. For although he seemed then to my hot head but lukewarm in the cause, yet now I can see how high he raised my college during the ten years of his mastership, which thing he achieved by a nice handling of his authority between the parties, whereby the turbulent spirits were pruned to a less rank growth, and the timid digged about and fostered to the plentiful production of sweet and peaceful fruit.

Such is the man as I see him now. Then it was different, for my hard zeal was always distasteful to him, and we were but sorry friends. So little indeed to my taste was the new spirit in the college, that on his constantly urging me to conform and take orders, I resigned my fellowship in fear of being deprived of

it, as Mr. Cartwright was afterwards, and retired to Longdene.

I had the full consent of my master for this. He had recently returned to Cambridge, and found himself the man of greatest weight in the University, and like to be elected Vice-Chancellor had he been in priest's orders.

'It will be better in many ways,' said he, when I asked him his advice, 'that you should return to your estate; your influence will be more useful there. In Cambridge we have an abundance of labourers. It is men like yourself that we now require throughout the country. The cause needs urgently the support of the gentry, who for the most part are papist or half-reformed. Since Mr. Drake has got the vicarage of Upchurch you will have a stalwart fellow-worker. Go then, and do your best till the time is ripe for our great blow. I do not mean in any way to attack our present detestable and superstitious manner of church government until I am made Professor of Divinity, and can speak with all the authority of our great University. Meanwhile in your private study you can help me in my labour of grinding the weapons, that they may be sharp and ready in my hands when the hour is come.'

Though feeling not a little sad at leaving my dear college, perhaps never to return, I could not but rejoice when I reached home that I had taken Mr. Cartwright's advice; for I found my good old guardian most grievously sick.

He seemed very glad to see me, but yet I could fancy

his manner was not so frank as of yore. It pained me not a little, for I could see by his pinched face that he was near to death's door. Nor could I understand why he should be so different, till after I had talked with him for some time, particularly of his spiritual state, we were interrupted by some one entering the room unbidden.

I started to my feet when I saw at the door a young gentleman whom I had known at Cambridge. He had been a scholar of King's, and was one of those who took little trouble to disguise their love of papistry. He was dressed now in a cassock, and wore a small skull-cap to hide his tonsure.

We saluted each other very stiffly, while Sir Fulke looked from one to the other in a frightened way, as though he expected us to fly at each other's throats.

'Which of us shall remain, Sir Fulke,' said I, 'since there is no room for both?'

'Both, lad, both,' cried Sir Fulke.

'Nay,' said the Catholic gentleman, 'you must choose between us. If you would have me do my office let this gentleman depart. I cannot defile the mass by celebrating it in the presence of a heretic.'

He said this in so soft and polished a manner that, though I felt my face flush, I would not let him have the advantage, but replied with my utmost politeness, speaking as though I had not heard him.

'It were better I should go, Sir Fulke,' I said; 'I cannot stay and stand by while a servant of Antichrist sullies your soul with superstition and idolatry even as it is knocking for entry at God's door.'

It was the priest's turn to look angry then, but he only bowed to me again and was silent.

'Tush, lads,' broke in Sir Fulke, 'there is no need for squabbling over me. What matter, Jasper, if I have a bit of a mass in memory of the old days? I have been an arrant sinner too, and would ease myself of a load of sin with just a piece of confession. I have robbed the Church grievously, curse that mad knave Drake that led me to it, and been a great swearer, Heaven help me; ay, and you help me too, Jasper, since you know better prayers against swearing than the priests. You shall come and pray with me after he has done, lad, and then God will know it was my wish to make peace with Him and all men before I died. Come, lad, will you not? I have no son but you to smooth my pillow, since Harry is beyond the sea. Go now, and come again. You would not grudge me a bit of a mass like my fathers to die upon. May be they would be ashamed of me when I went to do homage with them up there, if I came amongst them unshriven and unhouselled.'

'Surely, sir,' I said, much melted at the old knight's words, 'you would depart in surer hope of Paradise if you please God in your death rather than your ancestors.'

'That is right, lad,' said the dying man, 'and so I will. You shall come and help me. But there would be no joy in Paradise if my ancestors and the old gentry turned their backs upon me, and I had to go with the new men. Save your father, there never was one of them I could abide; and Mr. Carter says Nick will not be there.'

I looked at Mr. Carter, as Sir Fulke called him,

though I knew it was not his name. He bowed again to me politely, and I repressed the angry burst that I had ready for him, being unwilling to cause Sir Fulke any further pain.

‘Sir Fulke,’ said I, ‘it was your good will to let my father be buried as he would. I have not forgotten that, and for your sake will this day forget my plain duty both to God and myself.’

With that I left the room, and waited below in the hall till I was called up again. I found Sir Fulke at the mercy of God, and senseless. The Catholic gentleman was gone. So I knelt by the old knight’s bed, and prayed long and earnestly to God that his opinions might be forgiven him, seeing they sprang of ignorance rather than perversity, though I had then, it must be said, little hope my prayers would be heard; and even as I prayed my guardian passed peacefully away.

CHAPTER IX

AFTER Sir Fulke's death, and the stir which naturally followed, things grew very quiet with me. Almost my whole day was devoted to what Mr. Cartwright had called 'grinding the weapons' for his coming attack on prelatical government.

In spite of my books I was very lonely. Mr. Drake was at this time almost always away on duty. Upnor Castle was full of Spanish prisoners, who had been seized in the neighbouring ports in pursuance of the Queen's recent order, whereby she sought to make reprisal for a like order issued by her loving brother-in-law the King of Spain. And that some recognition might be made for the labours of the Inquisition so generously bestowed on the English prisoners in Spain, Mr. Drake was ordered to preach at Upnor every day.

It seemed a great delight to the old navy preacher to go and rail before them at the Romish church, and it was no doubt most medicinal in his case, for never saw I a man more furious against Spain than he was at that time, and not without cause.

Frank Drake had sold his bark, and sailed with his cousin, Mr. John Hawkins, in the great trading ex-

pedition which Sir William Garrard and Company had fitted out for the Guinea coast and the Indies. His kind old kinsman suffered him to venture his small savings with him, and had given him a petty officer's place in the fleet, out of pity for the wrongs he had suffered at Rio de la Hacha, under Captain Lovell, of which I have already spoken.

We were all rejoiced at his good fortune, for it was as pretty a sail of ships as ever left the coast. There was the great *Jesus of Lubeck*, Mr. Hawkins's admiral; the *Minion*, his vice-admiral; a smart bark of fifty tons, called the *Judith*; besides three others, the *Swallow*, the *William and John*, and the *Angel*. It was, moreover, no fast secret that the Queen's grace and many of the Council were sharers in the venture, so that it lacked not any kind of furniture, either of men or arms, and great things were expected from it for all concerned, even to the lowest mariner. Indeed I myself had adventured a moderate sum, being persuaded by Drake how profitable the negro trade had been and would be again.

Of this expedition nothing had now been heard for more than a year, and we began to grow anxious. At last a Spaniard who had put into Plymouth gave Mr. William Hawkins intelligence that his brother was on his way home, laden with the untold spoils of a town which he had sacked, and of prizes which he had taken on the seas. We hardly knew what to think of this, for such dealings were not at all to John Hawkins's liking. He was a wary, far-casting man, and I always

thought looked on trading, especially in negroes, as more profitable than piracy, as indeed it was. Thus he had always laboured while in the Indies, by just dealing, that the planters and merchants should stand well with him and secretly support him, when, as happened sometimes, he was forced to carry a high hand over governors who refused to trade quietly.

Mr. Drake was sure the report was all another Spanish lie, and was not surprised when, some time after, he heard that some Spanish mariners had been bragging over their cups that Hawkins and all his men had been entrapped and put to the sword far inland, and the whole undertaking brought to nought. I need not say with what alarm and anxiety these reports filled us, for they sounded far more like truth than the last. It in no way decreased our fear for Frank's safety when shortly afterward the Queen seized the treasure-ships of the Duke of Alva, which had been chased by privateers and pirates into Southampton, Plymouth, and Foy, and were still lying there, since the ship-masters knew not how to get through to the Netherlands. We could not doubt then that the Council had certain news that all we feared was true. Every one now gave up all hope, and thought only of revenge and reprisal, when tidings joyfully reached us that the *Judith*, one of the ships of the expedition, had put into Mount's Bay, crowded with twice her proper crew, and in command of 'Captain' Drake!

All kinds of rumours now arose of what had happened, mingled with news of how the Spaniards had laid

an embargo on British ships in the Netherlands and in Spain, and imprisoned every Englishman they could clutch. The Queen replied undaunted with like boldness, and every prison along the coast was packed with Spanish sailors, and every town-hall with treasure and rich cargoes.

Such doings very soon caused it to be reported with greater certainty that the Council had certain news of Mr. Hawkins's death and the destruction of all his men, when to our great relief it was said that the *Minion*, with the general aboard and a half-starved crew, had come home. We were more hopeful now, but hungrier than ever for news. Mr. Drake brought us every kind of horrible tale from the Spanish prisoners at Upnor. I think they devised them in pure revenge for his preaching at them, and the more they lied the more he rated their idolatry and superstition.

It was some time before we heard the truth. Frank sent us letters (in which I noted that he wrote himself 'Captain' Drake) saying that Mr. William Hawkins, Governor of Plymouth, had sent him up to inform the Council fully of what had occurred, and that he was detained in London upon that business. So things stood with us when one morning, a month or more after Sir Fulke's death, I was awakened by the sound of a gruff, loud voice, such as soldiers affect, in conversation with Lashmer's somewhat strident tenor.

'Good master soldier,' cried Lashmer, 'I tell you he is still abed, and you cannot see him this two hours.'

‘Nay, by this bright honour, but I will see him,’ said the other.

‘And yet I think you will not,’ said Lashmer; ‘and yet again, by this bright honour is a good oath, and a gentleman’s oath, and one that may not be sworn to a lie or a thing that is ~~not~~ true, unless, indeed, there be provocation; for provocation, look you, master soldier, excuses many things. It is your great peacemaker.’

‘Why, this is monstrous logic,’ returned the bass, ‘and such as I never heard all the time I was sergeant-groom under the Signor John Peter Pugliano, esquire of the Emperor’s stables, a man of most fertile Italian wit. What need of the philosopher’s stone, if by mere logic you can make of provocation a peacemaker?’

‘Well, softly now, and I will show you,’ answered Lashmer, whose talk served often to wile a dull hour, since he had been to Cambridge and gleaned I know not what stray scraps of learning that careless students had dropped in his way,—‘I will show you how a man will come to swear the peace of another for some assault, or battery, or mayhem, or anything, and that other shall show provocation. Then shall no peace be sworn, and they shall be at one again. For it shall appear that he who battered the other did him no wrong, seeing there was provocation in it. So they that thought they had quarrel shall find by this same sweet provocation that they have none.’

‘Then must I provoke all men,’ said the sergeant-groom, ‘if I would live at peace with them.’

‘Ay, by this bright honour,’ said Lashmer; ‘then no

matter how often you get a bloody coxcomb, yet shall you never have quarrel with any man.'

'Then will I now most lovingly break your pate,' said the other, 'that you may stand my friend and bring me to your master. For my master, the most excellent esquire, Henry Waldyve, bade me spare no pains to see your master as soon as possible.'

Whether my servant's logic would have been put to this severe test I cannot say, for at Harry's name I sprang out of bed and cried from the window that I would see the messenger forthwith.

I hurried from my chamber to find Harry's servant discussing his morning ale with Lashmer. He rose to a stiff military position as I entered, and made me a most lofty salute with his Spanish hat. He was a tall, soldierly-looking man of about forty years of age, with a peaked beard and very fierce moustaches that had been nicely disciplined in the Spanish fashion to curl nearly up to his eyes. By his side hung a very terrible 'schiacona,' which he wore instead of a rapier, after the fashion of the German *reiters*, considering, as he afterwards told me, that the broadsword was the only fit weapon for horsemen. It had a great steel closed hilt, presenting such a defiant tangle of rings, hilt-points, and twisted bars after the latest pedantic fancy as to make the beholder tremble to think what the blade must be.

Indeed his whole appearance was foreign. He wore a large ruff, a thing as new to me as his sword; and his doublet, which showed clearly the marks of a corselet

often worn over it, was pinked and slashed in the furthest fantastic fashion.

‘If you come on the part of Mr. Waldyve,’ said I, receiving his salute, ‘you are thrice welcome.’

‘In truth I bring you, sir, that most excellent and soldierly young gentleman’s most full and lovingly complete commendation. Know me, at your worship’s service, as Alexander Culverin, sometime sergeant-groom under the Signor John Peter Pugliano, esquire of the Emperor’s stables, and now body-servant and master of the horse to that most proper gentleman Mr. Henry Waldyve.’

All this he said drawn up as stiff and soldierly as though he were mounting guard over the Emperor’s own bedchamber. His presence much impressed my peaceful follower, though to me he was a thing to smile at lovingly; for somewhere in his face was a simple, kindly, almost childish look, that was strangely in contrast with his fiercely curling moustache, his loud, gruff voice, and his very warlike bearing.

‘When came your master home?’ I asked, for in truth I was greatly surprised to hear of his return so suddenly.

‘But a week ago,’ said the Sergeant; ‘since which time we have been lying at my Lord of Bedford’s house in London; for Mr. Waldyve had matters to report to the Council ere he could come down here.’

‘And have you brought me any message from him beside his commendations?’ I asked.

‘Saving your worship’s worship,’ said the man, ‘he

would have you ride over at your worship's most early haste to Ashtead, since he would have some speech with you together with some poor soul, who, to judge by his most unhorsemanlike carriage, is a mariner or sailor.'

'Gave he the name of this same sailor?' I asked.

'That he did. A name he had that sorts well with one who splashes about all his life in that most base element called water. To be short with you, it is one Captain Drake, though I hold it most false heraldry to apply so dignified and soldierly a title to a seafaring man.'

'Well, we can talk of this as we go,' said I, in a mighty hurry now to be off. 'I will ride back with you now, if you will wait till Lashmer has saddled our horses.'

I tarried but to eat my manchet and drink my bowl of ale, since I hold a morsel in the morning with a good draught, sweetened and defecated by all night standing, to be very good and wholesome for the eyesight.

As I mounted my horse I saw Culverin watching me with a most judicial air. I must own I felt no little comfort and gratitude to my guardian for his good training to see him nod a distinct though qualified approval to himself when he saw me in the saddle.

'Know you what business your master has with Captain Drake?' I asked as we rode out of my gates, my mouth watering for news.

'Nay, not I,' answered Culverin; 'yet I hope it will be none, since I hold it unseemly for a gentleman

and a soldier to have near communication with sailors.'

'Yet Captain Drake,' I said, 'has great love and respect for land-soldiers.'

'Has he indeed?' replied the Sergeant, looking very pleased; 'a most notable sign of his good sense, and had he said horse-soldiers, it would have been a notable sign of his better sense.'

'How make you that good, Master Culverin?' asked Lashmer, whose hunger for an argument was by this time getting the better of his awe of the stranger.

'It is good of itself, Master Lashmer,' said Sergeant Culverin. 'For when I was sergeant-groom under Signor John Peter Pugliano, esquire of the Emperor's stables, he was wont to say (and, mark you, he was a man of most fertile Italian wit) that soldiers were the noblest estate of mankind, and horsemen the noblest of soldiers. They were masters of war, he said, and ornaments of peace, speedy goers and strong abiders, triumphers both in courts and camps. In truth, your only salvation is to be a horse-soldier. Take that of me.'

Seeing Lashmer was on the point of a desperate charge upon this monstrous position, I changed our subject quickly by asking news of Harry.

'It was but three weeks ago, sir,' said Culverin, 'that we got your letters telling of Sir Fulke Waldyve's death. We were in winter quarters, whither we had gone when the campaign ended so ill for us with the fall of St. Jean d'Angely. Then we tarried not for drum or trumpet, but came straight homewards in the first ship

that sailed. It was a pity it fell so. There was pretty warfare there, and most profitable for a gentleman to see. For, look you, sir, a soldier can learn more from defeats than victories. Take that of me. We were present all through last year's campaign, and rode in M. Ardelot's regiment when they drubbed us so soundly at Jarnac. After his death we were attached to the admiral himself, and so continued till our second rout at Moncontour. It was an evil time for the Huguenots, but a pretty school-house for a scholar of arms, and my master was growing to be a most sweet soldier. I tell you, sir, his name was on every tongue in the army, so high a courage and discretion had he shown in all passages of arms we had made together.'

'Ah,' said I, 'there is little need to tell me that. I knew well what men would say of him when the time came to show what stuff was in him.'

'And so did I too, sir,' said he. 'As soon as ever he came to the Emperor's Court, and rode down to the tilting ground, I said to Signor John Peter Pugliano, esquire of the stables, "There is a soldier," said I; for his seat was as well as a man could sit. It won my heart, sir, to see him. From that hour I was his servant. I craved leave to direct his exercises under the esquire, and grew to love him as my own horse.'

'Was it, then, pure love that made you follow him to England?' I asked.

'Indeed, sir, I think it was. After he had been with us a year or so, he took it in his mind to see some service in the French wars. I begged to go in his train ;

for I loved him, and could not see him go to the wars without a proper following or some old dog to watch over him when dangers were thick.'

'And you gave up your honourable post of sergeant-groom for his sake?'

'Ay, sir, and willingly; for he promised to carry me to England with him after he had had his fill of fighting. My bowels yearned for the land I had not seen for twenty years. Indeed, sir, there's no man loves the smoke of his own country that hath not been singed in the flame of another soil. Take that from me, sir, saving your wisdom.'

'Then you are of English parentage, Sergeant Culverin?'

'Yes, sir, though many think not, because of my name and a certain carriage that comes to men of travel; yet I am English born, sir, and never knew father or mother, save an English great piece on the Calais barbican.'

'Then save you, Sergeant, from your kinsmen,' said I, thinking he was jesting, 'since the Moors call great pieces the "mothers of death." You and it are the only children I ever heard that they had.'

'You are merry, sir, but I jest not,' said the Sergeant, drawing himself up very stiff on his horse. 'What I say is sober truth. The first human eyes that ever saw me, as I could ever hear, were just those of an old gunner, who found me one night in the mouth of his culverin. He, good soul, took care of me. "She is the only lass I ever loved," he was wont to say, "but I never thought

she would be mother of a son to me." So he took me home, and his mates and he would have the priest kursten me "Culverin" after my mother, and "Alexander," because they said I must be born to be a mighty soldier.'

'Truly, Sergeant,' said I, seeing how serious he was, though I had much ado to stop laughing, 'a most honourable and soldierly descent.'

'Ay, sir, you may say that,' he answered, looking round at Lashmer, from whom came a sound of choking laughter. 'A most soldierly and royal parentage. She was as good a piece as ever was cast, and stamped, look you, with King Harry's own arms, rest his soul! To say no more, for modesty's sake, it is not one or two who have rued their ribald merriment at what I am telling you.'

And with that he laid his hand upon the great steel hilt of his broadsword, and glared so terribly at Lashmer that I thought the poor lad would have fallen from his saddle from pure fear of the bristling of the Sergeant's fierce moustache.

I do not think Lashmer ever laughed at Sergeant Culverin again, at least not in his face. Indeed it was not many who did; most men feared his sword too much, and those who knew him best, and were not afraid, loved him too well.

I think three men never greeted each other more warmly than Frank, Harry, and I when I reached Ashstead. It was like summer to see them again, yet I found them much altered.

Harry seemed shocked by his father's death, and looked very sad in his black clothes. His face was bronzed, his short beard neatly trimmed to a point, and a scar scarce healed stretched across one temple. Yet I thought I never saw him look more manly, handsome, or lovable, in spite of the foreign look his travels had given him.

Captain Drake, too, was changed. His eye was as bright and his ways as cheery as ever; yet when he was not speaking I could see in his face a harder and sterner look than there used to be. His dress, too, was very different to what he had worn in the old days; though plain, it was of good stuff, and cut according to the fashion. He wore, moreover, a smart rapier, and had the air of a gentleman, though without having lost his sailor-like looks.

'You will want to know why I sent for you, Jasper,' said Harry, as soon as our greetings were over.

'Nay, that do I not,' said I; 'so long as you sent for me, that is enough.'

'Well, but I had a good reason,' answered Harry. 'I met Captain Drake in London, whither he had come on business, as he will tell you. As he was coming hither to see his father at Upchurch we journeyed together, and he told me—tell him, Frank, what you told me, and then he will know why we sent for him.'

'Well, lad,' said Captain Drake, setting himself down for a long tale, as sailors will, 'you remember how I wrote to you of the voyage which I made to Cape de la Vela in the Indies with Captain Lovell, the year after

our brush with the caravel, and how it all ended in the wrong I suffered from the Spaniards at Rio de la Hacha for no cause but their accursed treachery?’

‘Yes, that I do,’ said I; for he had written to me about it at Cambridge, and Mr. Drake, too, had told me fully of that most wicked dealing with his son.

‘Well, that was well enough,’ Drake went on; ‘a plague on the false papist hearts; but what came after was worse.’

‘And at one time we feared it was worse again,’ said I; ‘for we thought we had lost you as well as our venture. But how came it about? We looked for nothing but success under Mr. Hawkins.’

‘And nothing but that should you have had,’ said Drake. ‘Merrily should we have singed the King of Spain’s beard, and filled some most noble pockets beside our own, but that Jack Hawkins was over scrupulous with the traitors. Things went well enough at first, in spite of bad weather, especially for me; for off Cape de Verde we fell in with a Frenchman from Rochelle, who had taken a Portugal caravel. This Jack Hawkins chased and took, and made me master and captain of her. We called her the *Grace of God*, and a good name too, seeing how God graced our venture. For we drubbed the Portugals wherever we met them, and before we left the Guinea coast we had gathered as fine a cargo of black flesh as a merchant need wish to see.

‘Being well filled up with what we sought, we sailed for the Indies. My luck stood by me still; for when Captain Dudley of the *Judith* died, Cousin Jack gave

me his place, and made me full captain. We found traffic on the Main a bit hard, because the King of Spain had most uncourteously charged that no man should trade so much as a *peso*-worth with us. Yet negroes are dear to a Don's heart, and there are ways, lad, there are ways that none know better than old Jack. So we had reasonable trade at mighty good prices, both in black flesh and our other merchandise, till we came to Rio de la Hacha. We were but two ships when we anchored before the town—the *Angel* and my lady *Judith*. The rest had been sent to Curaçoa to make provision for the fleet. So they thought to try their scurvy tricks there again, and refused us water, thinking thereby to starve us into selling our negroes for half nothing. The Treasurer, who was in charge, had fortified the town and got some hundred or so of harquebusiers behind his bulwarks ; so we could not land, but took a caravel in spite of all their shot, right under their noses, and rode there till our general came round in the *Jesus*. They soon found that an English cock could crow as loud and louder than a Spaniard. For old Jack set ashore two hundred small shot and pikemen, and took the town. It was no less than their discourtesy deserved, and they suffered no harm ; for every man of them ran clean out of the place at the first bark of our snappers. I think it was only a little comedy to please the King of Spain ; for Master Treasurer and all of them came in at night to trade, and before we left we had two hundred less black mouths to fill and a pretty store of gold and pearls in our hold.

‘ We had done such a brisk trade and no bones made all along the coast, after our persuasions at Rio de la Hacha, that when we came to Carthagena, our traffic being nearly done, we tried nothing against it, save that the *Minion* saluted the castle with a few shot from her great pieces, while we landed and took certain *botijos* of wine from an island, just to drink their health, leaving woollen and linen cloth there in payment. So we bore up for Florida ; but being taken in a *furicano*, which I believe the Lord sent to guide us, we were driven into San Juan de Ulloa, the port of the city of Mexico, as you know. Now listen, lad ; listen what God sent us. There in the port at our mercy—entirely in our power—were twelve galleons, laden with two hundred thousand pounds’ worth of gold and silver. Two hundred thousand pounds ! Think of it, if you can, without going mad, for I can’t. Yet, in spite of God’s plain guidance, as I told him again and again, Jack Hawkins set them all at liberty without touching a *peso*, fearing, as he said, the Queen’s displeasure, the simple fool, if he touched the goods of her most loving brother-in-law ! Ah ! had we known how the brave Queen was going to deal with her loving brother-in-law’s money in her own fair ports of Southampton and the West, Jack would have listened to me when I told how best to please her Grace !

‘ Well, it was no good. Not a *peso* would he touch, but only asked leave to refit and victual ; and now, lad, comes the worst of all. Next morning we saw open of the haven thirteen great ships, being the Plate fleet

and its wafers—a sight to make an honest Protestant man's mouth water. Lord, Lord, Jasper! I cannot think of it with loving-kindness to Jack. Just see now, lad! We had complete command of the haven. Not a fly-boat, not a pinnacle could enter or leave without our yea. To keep the Spaniards outside in the north wind was only the other way of saying present wreck to every rag and stick of them; and that meant wellnigh two millions loss to the Spaniards, and Heaven knows what gain to us in wreckage, and flotsam, and trifles we should have had for our trouble in saving crews.

‘Did God ever show a greater mercy to His faithful people than that? I ask you, sir. You know better than I, because you are a scholar. Yet Jack Hawkins let his scruples stand before the plain will of God, and would make conditions with them. Would I could have told him what our lion-hearted Queen was doing in the narrow seas with her dear brother-in-law's belongings; but we did not know. Then he would have heard the voice of the Lord aright. But, as it was, he was stubborn, and let them all in on conditions of peace, and safe fitting and victualling for ourselves; to the which was passed the word of Don Martin Henriquez, Viceroy of Mexico, himself, who was with the fleet; a pox on him till this hand has squeezed him dry, and then the knave may go hang!

‘I need not tell the rest. You guess what came—what must have come. It was like night after day. Relying on all their solemn words and papistical oaths,

no less than on the hostages they had given us, we laboured together two days peaceably to bestow the ships properly in the port and prepare ours for refitting. A good part of our ordnance we set ashore upon an island in the mouth of the port, which, by the conditions, was to be in our possession.

‘On the third day after we had let them in, when we were about to set the carpenters to work, and were all dismantled, I could see things were going treacherously, in spite of their fine words. Soldiers were marching to and fro, and ordnance being bent upon us. Jack sent to inquire what it might mean, and Don Martin Henriquez passed his word of honour to protect us from treason.

‘Still the preparation went on, and Jack protested again—this time with much effect; for his messenger was seized, a trumpet blown, and in a moment all was in a roar and blaze. Out of the smoke that hid the quay and ships we could see the glitter of harness and pikes and halberds, and the glow of matches, as hundreds of soldiers rushed upon us and thrust out to the island in crowded long-boats. In a trice our men ashore were overcome and cut down, and our ships swarming with Spaniards.

‘Lord, what a fight it was then! Tooth and nail, claw and heel, we went at them. Such a roar and din there was as my ears at least had never heard, till it lulled again, and not a Spaniard was left alive upon our ships. It was glorious work, but we had no time to think of it.

‘No sooner were we clear than we cut our headfasts and warped out on our sternfasts ; but though that saved us from boarding again, it did little good ; for the treacherous dogs were masters of the island and our great pieces, as well as of their own on the ships and the platform. Still, for a whole hour we made a great fight of it, in which we sunk two of their great ships and burnt another.

‘By this time the *Jesus* was dismasted and an utter wreck. She, being the admiral, had aboard of her all our treasure—twelve thousand pounds in gold, lad, besides negroes and merchandise.

‘It was impossible to bring her off, so Jack resolved to abandon her, after taking out all she had. To this end we drew her off and set her in front of the *Minion*, to keep off the shot of the Spanish batteries, and so save our whole ship from destruction while we were at our work. For the *Minion* was the only ship we had now that would sail, except my *Judith*, which I had got safe off after the fight. But the Spaniards saw our game, and fired two other great ships of theirs, and loosed them down wind at us. They may call us cowards, Jasper, but it is a fearful thing to see two fireships a mass of roaring, crackling flames, and each twice and thrice as big as yourself, bearing down on you. Who can blame them if the crew of the *Minion* grew afraid and cast her off from the *Jesus*, in spite of all their captain or the general could say ? So suddenly was it done that the general himself almost perished in trying to come aboard the

Minion, and many were drowned in the attempt, and many left aboard the grand old *Jesus* with the treasure, to fall a prey to those rake-hell traitors.

‘I quickly lay aboard the *Minion* with the *Judith*, and took out of her all I had room for; and so, at the mercy of God and looking for nothing but death, seeing how overladen we were and without proper provisions, I made my way home as speedily as I might. Jack takes it unkindly that I left him; yet, God knows, I did it for the best, trusting, by His help, to save my ship and all those aboard, if such a thing were possible to any man. Who knows, if I had tarried with the general, I should not have fared like him, and had to set half my crew ashore to suffer Heaven knows what miseries at the hand of Indians and wild beasts and Spaniards, which is worse. Ay, and to lose half the rest from famine and sickness. God be praised for His mercy to me, and judge between me and Cousin Jack.’

So Frank Drake ended his relation of that famous adventure in the port of San Juan de Ulloa, and fell to walking fiercely up and down the room where we sat. I knew not what to answer him; for I was almost as much moved as he, and firmly believed it was the will of God that they should have destroyed the two Spanish fleets. It is strange to look back upon now, yet I cannot wonder that I thought as I did, seeing what my masters had been at Cambridge, and, above all, in what a perilous case England then was.

Never, I think, was reformation in greater danger

than at that time. There were already constant rumours of the disquiet in the north. The rumblings of the Papist storm that was soon to burst from thence were making themselves heard. The Scots Queen sat fouling the nest to which she had flown for refuge, in our eyes like some unclean bird that bred new traitors every day, and Spain cried louder and France blustered more fiercely against the one stout heart which would not bend to Rome.

The Queen still stoutly held the Duke of Alva's treasure, which she had seized; our ports were closed to Spain, and those of Spain to us. Sir William Winter was fitting out his expedition to relieve Rochelle, with victuals, men, and furniture for the Huguenots. Papist prizes, Spanish, French, no matter what, were daily pouring into our ports upon the narrow seas, and Don Gueran de Espes, the Spanish Ambassador, was a prisoner in his own house in London. It was said at all hands that the times could not long endure the strain, and we looked for war to burst out every day.

What wonder then, if, when the whole host of Antichrist seemed to be gathering about us, I, like Francis Drake, saw the finger of God in the hurricane which had put it in our power to make so big a blow at His enemies, and read in the disaster that followed a judgment on those who spared to spoil the Egyptians? That was what the scholar said to the sailor; ay, and honestly believed it too.

'Have no doubt, Frank,' said I, 'it was the Lord's will that you had smitten and spared not. It was His

plain and manifest mercy to you to put it in your power to bruise the serpent's head. Would God Captain Hawkins had listened with your ears !'

'That is what I tell Harry, but he scorns it,' said Drake eagerly ; and Harry, to my inquiring look, only laughed a little low laugh, so full of complete amusement that it made me shudder, and there rushed to my mind the horrid Italian proverb that we heard so often—*Inglese Italianato è Diavolo incarnato*.

'Do you not think, then,' I asked of Harry, 'that it is God's will that we should smite Antichrist and all his host ?'

'Well, let that pass, lad,' said Harry, laying his hand gently upon my knee. 'I know not too well what God thinks of us ; but it is my will, and England's will, that we should smite, as you say, the King of Spain, and that is why I sent for you. Ever since he came home Frank has been striving to get redress from Spain through the Council, but things have come to such a pass with embargoes and imprisoned ambassadors that all hope of that is at an end. So Frank is going to fry his own fish. Tell him what you are going to do, Frank.'

Drake looked at Culverin and Lashmer, who had remained in the room, with that same strange stare of his, as though to see whether he might safely speak before them.

'Shall they go ?' said Harry.

'No,' said Frank, after a pause, and the Sergeant saluted him, and Lashmer looked like a happy sheep.

‘They are neither men to blab, yet we must be close; for it would seem there is a Spanish ear grows on every village cross.’

Therewith Frank Drake unfolded to us his mighty project, of which I think none but his heroic soul had yet dreamed—that glorious enterprise which, before a few more years were gone, was to make England’s heart to leap with pride like a young stag, and set her fair body throbbing with the wild untamable life that was to make her what she is.

‘The time is past for child’s play,’ he cried, with glowing face, ‘the time is past for nibbling at our enemy in the narrow seas, it is past for peaceable trade with them. If we are to live and dare worthily of our manhood, we must bite hard and deep in their vitals. Where is that, lad? Whence comes their life? Where but from the Indies? There lies the heart of Spain, the heart of Antichrist, open and unprotected, for a man who dares to try. I have seen and I know. They are no match for us. See what we did at San Juan de Ulloa. In spite of their numbers, in spite of their treachery, we saved two of our ships and they lost five of theirs, and all three times the *Minion’s* size at least. I suffered there, but still I learnt a lesson which, by God’s help, they shall rue the teaching of. But he who attempts this must not flinch or quail. Jack Hawkins is no man for it; but I can do it, lads, under God, I can; and if I do it, it shall be under no man’s flag but my own.’

‘Frank,’ said I, ‘I believe if there is a man in Eng-

land can attempt this thing it is you. But be not hasty to throw away your life, which England needs. Think of those unknown seas for which you can get no pilot in England; think of the power of him you attack.'

'I know, lad, I know,' answered Drake, as calm and confident as ever. 'I have thought of it. I will have a pilot, and that pilot shall be myself. It may take a year or two, but at last I will know those seas as well as any Spaniard of them all. Then I will strike, and let them see how I can revenge myself. Revenge is the Lord's, and by His chosen people He does His work. To you, and such as you, He looks to help me in this, and I have come to ask if you will join me in working the revenge of God.'

CHAPTER X

BEFORE we parted I had promised to help Frank, as far as my purse would go, to fit out a ship for the Indies, that he might make survey of the whole region, and find out when and how best to strike his blow, and haply pick up a prize or two to pay his fellow-adventurers a fair profit on their risk.

Harry helped him too, but to a very small extent, for his travels had made a large hole in his purse, and he never had the heart to squeeze his tenants so hard as others would have done in like case. Frank's kinsmen, the Hawkins, still took what they called his desertion at San Juan de Ulloa so unkindly that he could get nothing from them, and while the disaster was fresh in men's minds a good many pockets were shut to him that a year ago would have run like a river at the very name of a venture to the Indies.

Still, by the next year—it was, I remember, soon after the bull for the Queen's deposition had been found affixed to Lambeth Palace—he sailed. It was, I think, in a great measure the fury with which that wanton insult to the Queen filled the country that helped Frank more than anything to get the money he wanted for his enterprise.

During the whole of this time Harry was in London or elsewhere with the Court, and not more than once or twice for a few days at Ashtead. I do not know whether I felt more lonely when he was away and I was poring over my books at Mr. Cartwright's work, or when he came down on his hurried visits.

Each time I saw him his heart seemed farther away from me. Not that he was less kind than of old, but now his whole soul seemed wrapped up in the pageant-ries, the passages of arms, and, above all, the ladies of the Court. Of these he seemed never to tire of talking, though I wearied of listening.

I was longing, as I used, to speak to him of all that was next my heart—of the great strife in which I laboured for the purifying of religion ; of the solemnity of this present life, of which he seemed to take no heed ; of the awful doom for all eternity, which I shuddered to see yawning before him. Yet I knew not how to win his ear. Whenever I tried to start such talk he was quick enough to see my intention and thwart it with a rattling jest or some whimsical conceit. Nor had I much heart for it, if the truth must be told ; for I dreaded in speaking to him on such things to find he was more Italianate than I believed him.

So in his company I was lonely, and in his absence lonely. I strove to find comfort in my books, hunting daily in their inmost coverts. All was game that my net enclosed. No allusion was too fantastic, no phrase too ambiguous, no simile too conceited, no argument too fanciful for me. I swept them all up to feed Mr.

Cartwright's great idea, no matter where I found them. Daily and all day I worked on, searching like some warrener for every unsuspected bolt-hole through which our adversaries might seek to escape. No sooner was one found than I was weaving cunning nets with terms and figures, premiss and consequence, to set across it, and entangle them in its wordy meshes as soon as ever they should try to give us the slip.

Yet I got little comfort from it all. For though my studies assured me of my own salvation, they also confirmed my dread and certainty of Harry's perdition. Never was my life more joyless than then. There was no one I cared to see except my servant Lashmer, and sometimes Mr. Drake, though I won a most godly name by entertaining all the preachers and such like that came my way. I was fast growing to be a morose misanthropic scholar, and an iron-bound Puritan to boot.

Yet I knew it not, but rejoiced to think how utterly I denied myself the joys of this world, and how dear in the sight of God my life must be. I shudder, too, to think that as the breach continued to widen between Harry and me, I began at last to find some sort of solace in what I saw in store for him hereafter, and though I prayed for him unceasingly my prayers were the prayers of the Pharisee.

Perhaps it was a sort of jealousy, that he was so wicked and so happy, while I, God help me for my blindness, was so good and so miserable. I confessed it not to myself, yet indeed I think it was no different. For those were the days when I and half England beside

were gathering up what we took in our ignorance for the "manna of heaven, when in truth it was little better than a foul poison to our souls.

But now I must cry forgiveness for my tedious babbling of myself, if indeed my credit be not already cracked with over much borrowing of patience with no return of profit or pleasure. Yet, at the risk of earning ill-will, I have thought so much necessary for the proper understanding of what next befell.

Such, then, was I when one morning some time after Frank Drake had sailed I again heard Mr. Alexander Culverin crying out for me at the gate. This time he was at once shown to my presence by Lashmer, where, with a grave salute, he presented me with a letter from Harry. I opened it and read as follows:—

DEAR LAD—After my most loving and hearty commendations, this is to crave you give me joy. A little pretty bird piped to me and witched my heart away or ever I felt it go. In despair I sang back the song I learned of her, and, the gods be praised, saw my way to steal her heart in payment for mine. Then, lest we should quarrel over the felonies, we agreed to love.

Ere Diana sleeps and wakes again the compact will be sealed by Holy Church. Then look for your sister at Ashtead, which I pray you see well bestowed for her coming, for I am too busy and happy to leave her side.

Yours from the seventh heaven of ecstasy, and higher than that again,

HARRY WALDYVE.

See a mad lover! I had near forgot to tell you your sister's name. It is the name of names, even the name of the little ruddy-haired child that I knew, and yet knew not, while I was of my Lord of Bedford's household.

‘Why, this is news indeed, Sergeant,’ said I.

‘Yes, it is new, sir,’ said Culverin; ‘that is all that is to be said in its favour. I knew he would do it, I knew he would, if we stayed at Court so long. Not that I blame Mistress St. John. It was not her fault. How any lady amongst them all could sit and see him ride a tilt without doing the like is more than I can say; but I claim no cunning in the management of women, sir, saving your worship.’

‘So you think it was his riding that won her?’

‘Never doubt it, sir. That and how men spoke of his conduct in the wars. It was enough to turn any woman’s head. I blame him, not her.’

‘But why blame him, Culverin?’

‘Why, sir, for good enough reason, because he has spoilt one of the prettiest soldiers and horsemen in Europe. For how can a man love his horse or even his weapon with a woman like that always about his elbow? It is not natural, sir.’

‘But cannot a man love his horse and weapon all the better that he has something he loves to protect with them?’

‘Well, I think not, sir, saving your scholarship. I never knew one that could; and if there is one, certes, it is not Mr. Waldyve. He never loved a horse well enough before, that was where he always failed. He had no contemplation of horsemanship. In the exercise of it he was without match that ever I saw, save only Signor John Peter Pugliano himself. But his contemplation of it was naught. The Signor Esquire of the

Emperor's stables always said so. He proved to him many times how it was a science to be preferred next to divinity. He gave him *La Gloria del Cavallo* to read, and *Crison Claudio* too, but it availed nothing. In pace, in trot, in gallop, in career, in stop, in manage he was a Centaur, but he could never see how peerless a beast a horse was; how it was the only serviceable courtier without flattery, the beast of most beauty, faithfulness, courage, and all the virtues. Why, sir, I have seen Signor John Peter Pugliano, when a man spoke slightly of a horse, so belabour him with the richness and strength of his contemplation, that before he ended the wretch was like to weep that God had made him a man and not a horse. But it was never born or bred in Mr. Waldyve, and this is what has come of it.'

'Still, men must marry now and then, Sergeant, though the Queen seems to think otherwise.'

'I know, sir, I know; yet I hold marriage a poor dis-tempered state that soldiers should leave to men of peace, saving your worship's presence. Still, it is not of that that I complain most. There is worse than that.'

'What do you mean? You told me of no ill fortune.'

'Did I not, sir? Why, then, it is this. He has given her his bay horse, and sent me down for the roan—by this light, he has, sir, given that peerless quadruped to a woman! What man with contemplation enough to fill half a pepper-corn could have done the like?'

I knew not how to console the poor soldier, so fell to asking him about Mistress St. John. He could tell me little, never having seen her except in the tilt-yard at

Whitehall and Hampton Court, when, as he said, it was easy to know the little red-haired lady by her most free nodding at his master.

So I had to rest content till she should come, meanwhile taking what pains I could to see that the work-people from Rochester carried out Harry's instructions. I found more comfort in the task than I could have believed, hoping that now my brother was coming to settle down at home things would go between us more as they used.

Indeed, so light did my heart grow as the time of their coming drew near, that I began to doubt whether it were not a sin for me take pleasure in the company of so carnally-minded a man as Harry, and to begin to think I ought wholly to eschew, as far as good manners would allow, the conversation of the wanton Court lady that I pictured his wife to be.

The day came at last, and, not a little doubting whether it were right, I rode out to Rochester to meet them.

They were already at the 'Crown' resting awhile when I alighted there. Harry rushed out and seized me by both hands, and then, throwing his arm about me in his old way, dragged me to see his wife.

'Wife! wife!' he cried, 'set a good face for our brother, whom you wanted so much to see. Here he is come to meet us.'

With that I saw rise to greet me a little lady not much over twenty, with ruddy hair and brown eyes like the Queen's. In a moment the memory of my old boy's

love at Cambridge came to my mind, but when I looked once more at the dainty little head and smiling face, set so prettily in her snow-white ruff, the memory was lost in the greater beauty of the present vision.

Beautiful as I had thought the Queen, yet she, I confessed, was more beautiful still, although so like. It was a more laughing face than the Queen's, and yet in her eyes, unlike the Queen's, there was that wistful look that all men love till they learn to fear it as own sister to discontent. Yet this I knew not then, having, as I say, known no woman all my life; and so my heart, that I had tried so sore to harden, was melted like wax at the soft music of her voice.

'Well met, brother,' she said, holding out her hand with a gay smile.

'Your desires upon you, lady,' I answered, taking her greeting with as little awkwardness as I could.

'A most gentle prayer, brother. And yourself shall begin its granting.'

'I, lady?'

'Yes, you. Yourself is my desire. Bestow on me yourself and call me "sister." All my life I have desired a brother, and Hal says, by your sweet leave, I am to be no more brotherless; so call me henceforth sister, brother Jasper.'

'Then, sister, shall I gain more than I bestow.'

'Nay, brother, it is I that gain. I have full report of all your scholarship and most excellent parts.'

'Believe it not, sister, or you will wrong yourself.

Harry will ever be making too long an inventory of my commendations. But he is a most false reckoner, and you must not take me by his tale.'

'Out upon you, lad,' said Harry. 'What a dry feast of modest phrases is that to set before your sister! Come, now, palm to palm is no greeting for brother and sister. A man would think you had never been to Court.'

But I drew back, feeling very country-bred, and blushed, and then a flush of sunset hue made her beauty radiant, and Harry laughed at us his rattling laugh, which his wife could only stop with kisses.

That made her my sister indeed. At first I had thought her manner tainted with too much Court freedom, but now she seemed a most wise and modest lady, who might in deed as well as word be a true sister to me. So we talked together pleasantly enough till it was time to go, nor did we stop our tongues as we rode out towards Ashtead. And yet again, now I bethink me, it was I that talked and she that listened, while Harry smiled to see us such good friends.

I thought he wondered, too, to hear me, and I am sure I marvelled at myself no less than that she should want to listen to my homily. Yet whenever my tongue ceased wagging, she had some little magic phrase or witch's glance to set it a-gallop again, and I felt I could talk to her till the sun grew cold.

'It is a scholar,' she said, as we came to the place where our ways parted, 'that I have always desired to call "brother." Some one whose mouth would be all my books in little, just as was my Lord Bedford's when I

was a little girl. And now methinks you have bestowed on me all my desire.'

'Indeed you wrong yourself and me. I am not such a one, though I think my master, Mr. Cartwright, is.'

'Ah, I have heard of him that he is a ripe scholar for all his wild doctrine; and now I know it, for I hear his pupil talk. I think Hal must speak no more than truth when he says you have read more books than Mr. Ascham himself.'

'I tell you, sister, you must not mark his commendations, that are bred in love and not in reason.'

'Now, I cry you mercy. You must not tell a newwed wife that love and reason are not one. That were a philosophy fit for none but monkish scholars. There I must school you, and you me in all else but that. So I will prove a most gentle scholar; and now farewell, my brother, since it is here our ways are parting.'

Mark what a change had come over my life since I travelled the road but a few hours ago. I had ridden into Rochester from pure good manners, thinking to carry a cold greeting to Harry's wife, and so return to my books and loneliness. How differently had it fallen out! Since I left Longdene I had found a sister—a courtly and beautiful woman to whom I could talk, and who would talk kindly to me. I knew not what to think as I rode slowly along, with the shouts of the crowds which had gathered to welcome Harry and his wife coming faintly to my ears across the fields on the still evening air.

It had been the first hot day of summer, and as the

night fell I sat in my old corner in the library at the open lattice, watching the golden labyrinth that broke up the dark stretch of the marshes into a hundred fantastic shapes of gloomy hue wherever the intricate channels caught the glow of the dying sunset.

No less mazy and shapeless, no less gilded and gloomy, were my wandering thoughts. My man-born sense of stern duty cried to me that the carnal conversation of Harry and his wife was sin to be shunned, a temptation of the devil to drag me from the godly work on which I was set. But then, again, my God-born sense of beauty both in body and soul said, 'Go to them, and there your hunger shall be filled.'

The labyrinth in the marshes had faded to a faint starlit glimmer here and there ere I had resolved my doubts. The whole host of heaven glittered down upon the sleeping world, and amidst them from either hand the *Lactea Via* seemed to show a fair path brightened with the light of God to the highest regions of His kingdom.

I knelt upon the deep window-seat and thanked God that He had given me a lantern for my path, and prayed for strength not to swerve from the way He had shown. For I had resolved to face the danger at Ashtead, that I might save the two souls I loved so well from the certain perdition to which I saw them drifting.

Ah me! what cunning casuists are our desires! How subtly will the wantons weave a cloak of reasons round about their nakedness till we know them not,

and follow whither they entice, taking them in their decent array for duty ! So we march on after them to death and sin, with proudly lifted heads, as who should say, 'See a man who forsakes all to follow Christ.'

It was not difficult with such a guide to find occasions for going to Ashtead. As the days of their married life wore on, and Harry tired of love-making, my visits grew frequent. He every day came to love his estate more and more, and was ever riding up and down it, with Sergeant Culverin at his heels, planning and altering and improving, just like his father. Nor could he do without a share in the country life around, and was always away whenever he could hear of a cock-fight or a bear-baiting within a reasonable distance.

'Come over and bear Nan company,' he would say at such times. 'Her bright wit misses the companionship of the Court, and will, I fear, grow dull and humorous unless you keep it clear. It is no little comfort to me that you can be by her with your learning. Her scholarship trod on the heels of mine when she was little more than a baby, and now it has slipped ahead where I can never catch it. So you must be a good brother, Jasper, and be to her what I cannot.'

So he would ride off, gallantly waving kisses to his pretty bride, and we were left alone to study cosmography together. She had begged me to teach it her, and so my great tomes got a second hallowing. I wondered daily more and more at her keen wit ; her quickness at grasping what I had to tell was past all believing unless seen ; yet would she never stay long

at it, but would soon want waywardly to wander out into the garden and down amongst the woodlands to talk with me of whatever fancies had taken her playful thoughts.

It was a pretty sight then to see how everything loved her. The cows came trotting at her call, the colts in the meadows raced for her caress and jostled each other jealously, while her dogs squatted round with drooping ears, miserable that her favours were for others, but too mannerly to protest. Then all together would follow her along the fence to the end of the field, where, as she went from them, they would break into rough play, and disperse cheerily to their rhythmical cropping of the grass again, while the spaniels, more fortunate, leaped round her with mended spirits.

Each husbandman we came to would pause at his work and grin in silly happiness as she nodded him a merry 'god-den,' and the woodman's eyes almost brimmed with tears when she would not stop to hear the oft-told secrets of his art; and then when we came near the village the children started out of the brakes to peep at her, while the younger and braver ran crying after her with a present of gilliflowers or long purples, which their hot little hands had withered by long cuddling to a sickly faintness.

The strangest and most difficult conquest which she made was Alexander. I remember well the day I saw it first. I was riding, as I often did, to Ashted by way of the park, when as I topped a knoll I saw her wandering across the close-cropped turf with the old

soldier at her heels, and a motley following of colts and cows and one short-winded hog. Now and again her dainty figure bent down to pick a flower, and as she stopped the colts stopped, and the cows and the hog, and the Sergeant stooped for a handful of all the flowers in reach.

My wonder was increased when I saw Harry not far off overlooking the work of the woodmen, seemingly forgotten by his devoted follower. I cantered over to her, and, giving my horse to Lashmer, joined her in her walk. Soon we came to a woodman's cottage, whither she was carrying some simple drug, which her own learned little hands had compounded, for a sick child. Culverin and I remained without.

'A most sweet and excellent lady,' sighed the Sergeant, as soon as she was out of hearing.

'What! is your mind so changed?' said I. 'But a few months ago you had not a good word to throw at her.'

'Well, that is getting on for a year now, sir,' he answered, 'and I did not know her as I do now. I did not dream what virtue was in her. Why, sir, there is not a colt here, take the wildest you will, that would not follow her up the turret stair. I never saw such management, except in Signor John Peter Pugliano. And then for contemplation, sir, I could not have believed it. It was but yesterday she told me horses were the only men for her heart, since there was nothing they would not do with coaxing.'

CHAPTER XI

DURING all this time of which I write I had said nothing to Mrs. Waldyve about religion. I had persuaded myself, and that easily enough, that I must first make her my warm friend, and gain some influence with her by my teaching, and such other ways as I could think of. She, I think, avoided all mention of it too, since she really loved learning, and feared by speaking of things deeper to ruffle the happy calm in which we sailed together.

It was not till after my little godson Fulke had been born, and Frank Drake had returned from the Indies, and was gone again to complete his discovery of those regions, that we came to talk of what was next my heart. Frank had been to see us, and Mrs. Waldyve was so taken with his manly, jolly ways, that when he was gone we often talked of him. I told her of his father and brothers, and their old strange life on the hulk, till one day she said she would like to go to Mr. Drake's church and hear him preach, for he made a discourse nearly every Sunday.

Harry, who of late had been made a Justice, laughingly gave us dispensation from attending our parish

churches, and the next Sunday we rode over to Upchurch. Harry stayed at home, and Mrs. Waldyve rode pillion behind Culverin, thereby for the space of our ride making him the happiest man in Christendom.

As we neared Upchurch we overtook a man, who seemed a preacher, riding the sorriest nag I ever beheld. In passing him I saw it was none other than Mr. Death, the same who had come with Mr. Drake for the ordering of my father's funeral. He looked less sour than formerly, and wore an aspect of smug and well-fed content; but as he knew me not I passed on without speaking.

Mr. Drake greeted us very warmly, and Mrs. Waldyve with great respect. He was in the churchyard talking with the godly farmers of the parish until it was time for the service. To-day the well-worn subject of the Queen's marriage, and all the danger that came of her delays, was set aside, and they had been discussing Mr. Strickland's Bill, which he had lately moved before Parliament for the abrogation of various religious ceremonies, and how the Queen's Grace had taken it so ill that she had put him in prison. They continued their talk after our greetings were done, while Mr. Drake drew me aside to ask what I thought of the new order of the Commission against reading, praying, preaching, or administering the sacraments in any place, public or private, without license. I condemned it so warmly, as will be easily guessed, for a piece of most wanton and sinful Erastianism, that the people in the churchyard gathered round to listen. I was in the midst of proclaiming it, on the authority of Mr. Cart-

wright, as a thing that should not and would not be borne, when little Willie Drake cried out from the skirts of the throng :

‘ Father, father, there’s a wolf in the fold ! ’

A movement was made towards the church, and I could now see the Sergeant pointing out to his mistress the score of bad points of a beast tied up to the gate, which I at once recognised as Mr. Death’s nag. Hoping to avert a storm, I begged them both to come with me into the church, which was now crowded ; but the tempest had already burst.

Mr. Death had got possession of the pulpit. It was a strong position, being only approached by the old rood-loft steps, which were cut through the solid pier of the chancel arch. The enemy was defending the narrow passage with the door, which he held tightly shut, and a smart fire of reasons, which he shot down at Mr. Drake from behind his *barricada*.

‘ You have no license, you have no license,’ he was crying as we entered.

‘ What, no license ! ’ said Mr. Drake. ‘ I who was licensed preacher to the King’s navy when you were still crying for the mass ! ’

‘ Ay, but the Archbishop has revoked all licenses, and you have not renewed,’ answered Mr. Death. ‘ The flock must be fed with the Word ; you may not feed them, and I claim your pulpit.’

‘ O Death, Death ! ’ cried Mr. Drake, ‘ is that your sting ? There was a time when you would brag that no Erastian prelate of them all should be your authority,

but only the voice of God, that called you to the ministry. Is this all that has come of your loud shouting for the battle? O Death, Death! where is now your victory?’

‘I care not for your roaring, Fire-Drake,’ cried Death. ‘You are no preacher, being unlicensed; and I, being licensed, have authority in every pulpit in the diocese.’

The people now began to cry out, some that they would hear him, and some that he should be plucked down and cast out of the church. Yet they all stood by, waiting to see how the two preachers would settle it; and they had not to wait long.

‘Nay, if you fear not my roaring, Death,’ said Mr. Drake, ‘let us see what my claws will do.’

With that he made a rapid *escalada*, and, seizing the garrison by the throat, plucked him forth by main force. Still no one interfered; so, wishing to end the scene, I whispered to Culverin to help Mr. Drake, which he did with great good-will, being, as he afterwards confessed, much taken by the valorous delivery of Mr. Drake’s assault.

Mr. Death cried lustily for a rescue, but all to no purpose. Between the two strong men he was helpless. In spite of his feeble struggles, they ran him right out of the church to where his horse was tied. There they set him in the saddle, face to the tail, and, giving his jade a smart cut, sent him in an ungainly canter on the road to Rochester.

It pained me to think that Mrs. Waldyve should have witnessed such a scene the first time I had taken

her to a Puritan church. She was looking shocked at what had occurred, and seemed in no way to share the merriment of the younger part of the congregation.

‘Let us go,’ she said; ‘I have seen enough. It is terrible.’

But I prayed her to remain, pointing out that Mr. Drake was in no way to blame, and begging her to stay and see how reverent the people would be when he began to preach. Unwillingly, I think, she consented, more for fear of hurting me than from any desire she had to stay.

Meanwhile Mr. Drake, a little flushed and breathless from his victory, had taken his place in the pulpit, and was giving out a psalm to quiet the people. They sang it all together in pricksong very orderly, so that when it was done they were in a decent mood for the sermon.

He preached from the words, ‘The hireling fleeth,’ in John x. 13, for the profit and confusion of that part of his flock which had given countenance to Mr. Death. After the manner of his kind, he rated them soundly for their treason, with text and parable and a score of quaint conceits.

‘Is this your gratitude?’ he cried. ‘Know you not your shepherd? I will tell you, then, what he is. He is one of those who, unlike the holders of other benefices, has stood by his flock and fed them, nor given their care to a poor, dumb, hireling curate, while he himself has gone riding round to other flocks to preach vain and new doctrines to them, that he may have in return plate and hangings and napery and money. I know you, what

you are. Your stomachs have grown proud and dainty against the Word. You must have choice ; you must have spicery ; you must have a new cook every day. You will run to every hireling who will throw you new meat, and turn from the sound old hay of your shepherd, who folds and feeds you every night. Out upon you ! Is this the way to appease the wrath of God, whereby the heart, the tongue, the hand of every Englishman is bent against another ? No ! But you care not what divisions be made, so long as your stomachs be tickled with new and dainty sauces. Are you mad, good people ? Has a devil possessed you ? Look, look towards the east ! See you not the great roaring bull that the vile Italian out of Rome hath loosed against you ? See you not the glitter of his brazen horns ; smell you not the stench of his filthy breath ; hear you not the clang of his iron hoofs ? Ah ! but wait and you will. Wait till the bringing forth of the bull-calves that he hath gotten ; wait till you see them compass you in on every side ; and wait till you see them grow fat as those of Bashan, on your faith and your consciences and your purity. Then you will see ; then you will smell ; then you will hear. In that hour you will cry to him who folded and fed you ; but the foul waters of idolatry will have passed over his head and choked him.'

In such wise Mr. Drake continued very earnest for a good space, the people listening with bated breath, and from time to time a mutter of approval, ay, and here and there tears of repentance.

Many have marvelled to me at Captain Drake's

eloquence, but I know whence it came, and if I knew not before I should have known that day. I have tried to write down some of what his father said, but even if it were rightly done, as I doubt it is not, yet could no one tell the force of his preaching, unless he had seen him hold spell-bound that throng which so short a while ago had been laughing at a rude jest and an unseemly brawl, in which he played the chief part.

I watched Mrs. Waldyve's face as he spoke on, and was, as it were, carried back to that day long ago when the Queen's grace was listening to the divinity act in Mary's Church at Cambridge. And no wonder, for never save then had I looked on a face so sweet and ever changing to new sweetness.

Her brown eyes were fixed wistfully upon the preacher, and she listened so intently that I could see the fire and humour and pathos of his words reflected as in a mirror upon her upturned face. Once or twice I could see her wince, as one in pain, when some too rude conceit or figure jarred upon her delicately-nurtured sense. Then she would look round to me as though to find what I thought of it, and, seeing my eyes fixed upon her, turn quickly to the preacher again with heightened colour, more beautiful than ever. I too tried to look away, at the painting of the murder of St. Thomas, half defaced and mouldering on the wall of the Becket Chapel ; at the strange chamber under the tower, where it was said a hermit nun lived in solitude so long ; at Mr. Drake's red face and ardent figure,

but all was beyond my power. I had no eyes save to read with beating heart the living book at my side, nor ears save to hearken to the still voice which whispered in them, 'Lo, how the true spirit of the gospel is re-awaking in her!'

It was the Sunday set apart for the quarterly taking of the communion. When the sermon was done, and while the people sang another psalm, the wardens fetched into the nave the trestles and communion board from where it stood at the east end of the church. Then they spread upon it a fair white cloth, and Mr. Drake brought forth a loaf of bread and a skin of wine, with cups and platters.

Mrs. Waldyve watched them as though bewildered or afraid, not knowing what to do.

'Jasper,' she whispered, 'we had better depart now. How can I receive the holy sacrament after this sort?'

But again I exhorted her to stay, promising that all would be done most reverently, and according to the plain word of the gospel, with nothing added or taken away, so that whether or not it fell short of what her conscience would wish, yet there could be no offence in staying, as there clearly would be in going.

She answered me nothing, but gave way and obeyed like a little child, leaning on me, as though for support to body and soul, as we drew near to the table. It was then I knew that I had prevailed. I knew that my will had overcome hers, and that the hour was at hand for me to set about my crowning work.

The people made way for us close to where Mr. Drake was seated at the table. Mrs. Waldyve knelt down, as she had been accustomed at Court. One or two old women, when they saw that, knelt too, in the old fashion of their courting days. I stood by her side, and the people thronged round, sitting or standing, as each thought best or could get accommodated. For to most this was a thing indifferent or adiaphoristic.

Mr. Drake now broke the bread and poured out the wine, and then passed the cups and platters to the people. Mrs. Waldyve looked up to me for guidance, and I bent over her to whisper what she should do. So we took and ate the supper of the Lord together, while Mr. Drake, from where he sat, read comfortable texts from the Scriptures, and now and again offered an earnest prayer of his own making.

With another prayer *ex tempore* and a psalm the service ended, and we all went forth, leaving the wardens to set the table back again in the chancel. Mrs. Waldyve said nothing as we waited in the churchyard for Culverin to fetch the horses. So we stood in silence, side by side, under the spreading branches of the ancient yew tree, returning the greetings of the villagers as they filed out under the lych-gate, and watching the couples that broke off from the mass, the gossips in close talk over the sermon, the lovers sheepishly far apart. At last they were all dispersed amongst the trees and the black and white cottages that nestled amongst them; and we were left alone, looking out over the melancholy Medway, which seemed lost amidst

the dreary Saltings and the inlets that ran up into the marshes. The Sergeant brought the horses at last, and Mr. Drake came to say 'Good-bye,' and so we went on our way.

For shame I must forbear to speak of the pride that filled my heart as we rode home in silence. She was in deep thought, with eyes looking far away. Now and again she looked towards me as though to speak, but her lips only let pass a sigh. I knew well of what she thought, and did not disturb her meditation. I knew well how that strange change had come over her, which now I know not how to name. It was a thing that came, and still comes, to many, whether of high or low degree. Men such as I was then, when they see its signs so suddenly, and, as it were, miraculously appearing, say, 'Behold, another whom the Lord has called !'

I say it is for very shame that I forbear, for now I know the coward that I was to play so upon a woman's passions. I see her now as some bright painted bird for which I lay in wait, spreading my nets in the way I had learnt by long and secret watching she would go, and setting gins for her, which I furnished with cunning baits, while she, trusting me, thought I did but feed her lovingly.

It was not till the afternoon that we spoke of it. We had been supping in the orchard, and Harry, finding us but dull companions, had fallen asleep in his chair.

'Jasper,' said Mrs. Waldyve, 'come, let us walk

together. I must have private speech with you.' We rose and wandered down our favourite walk by the park, but to-day the colts had no caresses. 'It cannot be right, Jasper, it cannot be,' she burst out, as we entered the wood.

'What cannot be right?' asked I.

'It cannot be right,' she said, 'to cast away, as you have done, all the old holy rites of the Church.'

'It is hard to part with them, I know,' I answered, 'since from your childhood you have learned to love and hold them sacred. Yet for that very cause must you cast them away. Ere we can hope to see religion purified, we must first stifle all that deafening ritual that drowns the voice of God.'

'Yet,' she pleaded, 'why must we approach Him, as we did this day, without order, without ceremony, without any token of homage? If we offer it to the Queen, surely the more should we do so to the King of Heaven.'

'I do not deny,' said I, 'that what we saw to-day might have been done more decently. Yet remember how long popes and prelates and priests have stood between God and His people, and marvel not if, now that He has called us to the steps of His throne, we know not at first how to approach Him reverently. But He will teach us, when at last we can draw near and hear what He will whisper in our ear. But still there are many left between us and the throne, in spite of all that has been done. But the hour is coming when one I know will raise his voice like a clarion

and bid them stand aside, in words they shall not dare to disobey. Then at last we shall be face to face with God, and know indeed what His will is.'

This and much more of like effect I told her out of my well-learnt lesson. She struggled ever more faintly against me, but I was strongly armed against all she could say. I told her of predestination, and what she should think of works done in the days of her unbelief. All the things she loved so well—ceremonies, vestments, and every relic of the ancient mass to which she clung—I condemned mercilessly with practised argument. I showed how Rome had abused the Christian faith, and how it could not be purified till every meretricious adornment by which worship had been turned to idolatry was cleansed away.

She fell at last to imploring me to leave her something, but I told her, without pity, that no good could come of any unholy union of the gospel and papacy, such alluring schemes being only thought on by their inventors as an unstable place whence it was hard not to slip back to Antichrist.

It was an easy task I had. In the wilderness of doctrine, where she suddenly found herself, she seemed but to want a guide who would take her by the hand and lead her to rest. So it was but a short work to set her again on the path she once had trodden under the good Earl of Bedford's lead, and which she had deserted for the flowery mazes of the Court.

It were tedious to tell step by step how we trode the sweet and dangerous way together. All will under-

stand if they remember what we two were. I, from long sojourn at Cambridge, a monk, for with all its faults my university was then a most well-ordered monastery,—a monk who, as it were, was on a sudden released from his vows; she, a woman who, after a strictly ordered childhood, was set loose in a pleasure-loving Court, where her life was an ever-changing scene of exciting pleasure and gallantry.

The change was too great for both of us. For myself I find no excuse, but for her much. Ere the first fires of her youth had burnt out she was overcome by the passionate love-making of the handsome soldier, who came covered with glory from the wars abroad to lay siege to her heart at home. What wonder if she loved before all that pattern of manhood and gentleness who so loved her, and thought she could feed on his love alone! What wonder that, when passion grew dull and she found how full of many things besides love a man's life is, and how full of things which, in spite of all her trying, proved but dull to what her life had been at Court, insensibly she was ready to open her heart to any excitement, even to me and my teaching!

If I had not been blinded by my own accursed pride and self-righteousness, I should have known by many marks which we passed whither our road led. I should have known when, after that first talk, we began to be silent in Harry's presence, though we could chatter well enough when he was not by. I should have known when we ceased to speak, and moved farther from each other whenever he came where we talked.

I should have known when she spoke to me of her misery in being wed to so ungodly a husband, and begged me to speak earnestly to him that he might amend his ways.

It is my one comfort of all that time that I still had manliness left to defend him with all my heart to her, and that I was spared that last depth of knavery, much used by craven gallants, who, that they may win a cheap and easy favour with a woman, will make her believe with a score of cunning lies that her husband is unworthy of her.

Though out of the deeps of my love for him I found a hundred excuses to offer her, yet I laboured when alone with him to turn his light heart to weightier things, well knowing it was useless, or who can tell whether I should have tried?

It was as we rode home over the downs from hawking wild-fowl on the marsh-lands in the valley of the Medway that I first attacked him, and I well remember that my surprise was rather at how much he had thought than at what his thought was.

It was such a glorious afternoon as now, since I have known Signor Bruno, lifts my heart to God more truly than ever did psalms and prayers, much as I loved them and do still. The wide and marshy river stretched out below us far away to the low haze-clad lands of Hoo and the misty Thames. Water and woodland and field were bathed in sunshine which seemed, as it were, to melt all Nature into such full and tender harmony with its Creator, as I think, after all my many wanderings,

can nowhere be seen in truer perfection than in our own dear England. Moved by the beauty which wrapped the land, Harry fell to praising it with a score of rich conceits, and I seized the occasion to broach the cask of divinity which I had brewed for him.

‘Surely,’ I broke in, ‘surely should our lives be one long song of gratitude, set to a holy and solemn tune, to Him who made all this so fair for us.’

‘Why, lad, why?’ asked Harry. ‘You can only conceive this of God—that He is a perfected quintessence of all that is best and fairest in us, and therefore must our love of these things, and our joy in them, be but a grain of sand beside the mountain of His. His delight in the great banquet He has spread is for all eternity, while we can but gaze upon it for a little hour. No, lad, I cannot thank Him for these things, which are but the crumbs that fall from His table; but I worship it all, and Him in it, as I was taught in Italy. When will you leave looking for Him in holes which are only full of musty quibbles and the mouldering shreds of men’s quarrels? Stand up, man, and see Him in yonder sky, in yonder woods, in yonder broad flowing river.’

‘But, Harry, Harry!’ I cried, feeling my worst fears confirmed, ‘have a care, or this Italian dreaming will run you into flat atheism.’

‘Ah, Jasper,’ he answered, ‘I fear you are only like the rest, and will brand me atheist and epicure because my voice is not raised in any controversy. Must I rail with Baius and howl with Brentius before you grant me faith? With whom shall I be saved, and with whom

damned? Show me that first, lad, for I cannot tell. When I first set out upon my travels I strove awhile to study these things for love of you and Mr. Follet, yet in every land and every city where I came I found the same angry unrest where Antinomian roared against Pelagian, and Synergists bellowed between; where Lutheran and Calvinist and Papist, and who knows what other legion of sects beside, did battle one with another, and each against all, till Europe seemed to throb and ring again with their unchristly din, and the sweet voice of God could I nowhere hear.'

'Nay, then, I fear you closed your ears in your impatience, or the true voice of our purified faith would have sounded clear enough above all the rest.'

'No, I tell you, Jasper, I opened my ears wide enough, but they were deafened with the clash of syllogism on syllogism, and lie on lie. My eyes were blinded with the glint of steel and the flash of fires. My nostrils were filled with the stench of railing breath. Then I cried, "Where, O God, shall thy spirit be found? Surely not on this earth, that men's tongues and pens have so befouled." But there was one under the sweet blue sky of Italy who whispered in my ears, "Turn thee to Nature and thou shalt find thy quest." I heard him and sought earnestly where he showed, and soon the whole world was bright with the spirit of God, and I was in the midst of it. Yes, lad, I turned from men and saw it shining in the limpid rays of the stars; I heard it in the waving grass and the laughter of the brooks; I perceived it in the sweet-smelling flowers.

Will you then cry "Atheist" at me for whom God is everywhere, when for you and the like of you He lies but in a little dogma, nay, in the mangled shred of a dogma? Take it not unkindly that I speak so hot, but it makes me mad to think that men will so befoul the nest which God has given them, and think they do Him service.'

'Indeed,' I answered, wishing to follow his mood, for I knew if I broke in as I would to another with my theology that he would only call me a Puritan and crack some kindly jest, 'I do not complain of your heat. There is doubtless much truth in what you say, for Luther himself wrote, "There is nought in Nature but a certain craving for God," yet he did not hold that mere contemplation of Nature will satisfy that craving. The beauty and fulness of Nature does but create the hunger which right doctrine alone will fill.'

'Nay, if Luther is to guide us, remember who it was who taught that this very passion for God of which you speak, and which is far from what I mean, becomes the lust of the spirit. It is that which sets your wits awry. Beware of it, Jasper, as you avoid the devil. For I tell you, from the lust of the spirit to the lust of the flesh is but a little step. You shall see it shortest in a woman.'

'Jest not, Harry, on things so solemn,' said I, not thinking even then that he could mean what he said.

'I jest not,' he answered; 'it is sober truth, and if I did jest, wherefore not? Sometimes I think that jesting is your only earnest, and that there is nothing but that which is worth living for.'

‘At least you jest in earnest now,’ I said, thinking to weather him on another tack. ‘Even you must grant that there are other things but that worth the life-search—*exempli gratia*, Fame.’

‘How do I know that?’ he answered; ‘for how shall Fame satisfy a man when he has got it? Why, look you, Fame is a thing begets hunger for itself faster than a dead dog breeds maggots. There was never a fame-glutton yet but went to his grave fasting.’

‘Tis because they hunger after earthly fame,’ said I. ‘Seek something higher. If you cannot pursue God, yet at least you may search out wisdom. That is earnest enough.’

‘Wisdom! wisdom!’ cried Harry. ‘Why, what is that? In truth, I think that Folly is the only Wisdom, and there’s no such profitable travelling as a voyage in the Ship of Fools. In a thousand times to one he who pursues Wisdom shall find he has no quarry but Folly, while he that runs merrily after Folly shall find on a sudden that he is carrying Wisdom in his hand. Who shall say, amidst the ruins of these broken times, where Folly shall be sought and where Wisdom shall be found?’

‘I know there is great confusion in the times,’ said I, ‘but still there is at least sure ground left for a scholar who will pursue diligently the arts and sciences.’

‘Who can tell even that?’ answered Harry. ‘Read Cornelius Agrippa, if you know him not. Read his *Vanity and Uncertainty of Arts and Sciences*, and you shall find wisdom there that will prove you, by most

nice argument and sharp reasons, that knowledge is the very pestilence that puts all mankind to ruin, that chases away all innocence, condemns all truth, and places errors on the highest thrones.'

'Oh, Harry, Harry!' I cried in despair, 'you are Italianate past all praying for.'

'Well, then, if you cannot pray with me, laugh with me, jest with me,' he answered. 'Are we not all the puppets and playthings that God has made for His laughter, while He sits at His feast. Let him who would be wise make haste to laugh at himself with God, and at all men with their little humours. Holà! Quester! Monk! holà, holà!' he shouted then to his hounds that stayed behind, and bringing his hand with a ringing clap upon his gelding's shoulder, broke gaily into a canter across the stretch of sheep-cropped turf that lay before us.

What could I do with such a man? To me he was all and more than I had dreaded he would become when he travelled into Italy. In my eyes he was but one more added to the long list of atheists and epicures which that wicked and beautiful land has filled.

Still, I would not desist from my efforts to win him back to what I deemed the only true path. Amidst the ruins of his faith I searched for some unbroken stones, wherewith I might lay the foundations of a new sanctuary for his soul. I tried to make him see the horrors and dangers of the Popish religion, and so teach him to love and cling to our Christian faith as its most stalwart opponent. The last time that ever I attacked him was when I thought by dwelling on the

idolatry of Rome to gain my end, seeing how wholly opposed it was to his own wide and spiritual conceptions. But it was all to little purpose.

‘In so far,’ he answered me, ‘as Rome is the enemy of the Queen and of England, she is also my enemy. Since the bull of deposition was nailed on the gate of Lambeth Palace I have been her foe, ready to do all in my power to strike and thwart and humble her as I may find occasion, or the Queen’s Grace bids me. Yet for Rome’s faith I hate her not, though I may smile at it sometimes, as I do at others.’

‘But surely, Harry,’ I said, ‘you must detest their damnable, idolatrous doctrines of the mass and saints and images. Even for your love of mankind you must loathe these chains, by which they drag men down into the dark pits of superstition.’

‘Rail not at idolatry, lad,’ he answered. ‘We are all idolaters. All men worship the idol which each sets up for himself in such manner as his mind, clogged with an imperfect shape, and, as it were, fettered and imprisoned in his visible body, can fashion it. Each has his own graven image, to which he bows. He thinks it is God, ay, and sometimes will almost persuade others so ; yet it is nought but a little unshapely bit, that he laboriously has hewn from the great soul that dwells in his mind. There is but one escape from idolatry. We must worship the one universal God, who is formless and yet of every form, who is everywhere and in everything, who, as I say, is a spirit that breathes in the sweet scents of the flowers, in the sighing of the summer

wind, in the twittering songs of the birds, in the kisses of lovers' lips.'

Such was the mangled philosophy he brought home from Padua, that lodestone of wit, to which then gathered all that was bold and learned and polished in thought throughout the length and breadth of Europe. What wonder that I, being untravelled, had no skill to win him from his opinions, and drew each day closer to the gentle spirit of her who so trustingly took me for her guide!

CHAPTER XII

It was early in the year of grace 1572, that Frank Drake came back from the second voyage which he made to discover the Spanish Indies. He came to see us soon after he landed, in most excellent heart. For not only was he the bearer of a modest return for our venture with him, but he also brought news that his discovery of those seas was now complete, and as happy in its omens as it was complete.

‘Heark ye, my lads,’ said he, setting a hand on our knees as he sat between us, and speaking in a low excited voice. ‘I have found the treasure-house of the world! I have found the well whence the Spaniards draw the life-blood that gives them all their strength to trouble Europe and champion Antichrist! Closer, my lads, while I whisper its name. Nombredios it is called, “the Name of God,” and in the name of God I will so rifle it and breed such terror in the place that thenceforth they shall rather call it Nombrediable.’

‘But how, Frank, how?’ we cried.

‘Why, easily enough,’ he answered. ‘They sleep there in fatness and security, they grow soft and

womanish with riches ; and who can wonder ? Since thither flow all the wealth of Peru, the gold of El Dorado, and the pearls of the Southern sea. Yet they protect it not, but lie secure in ease and wantonness, because they deem the land is theirs, since the vile Italian has given it to them ; they deem it is theirs, because they think no man can sail thither save with their pilots : but we can and will by God's help. I know a safe place for rendezvous hard by, whence we may strike, as we will, swift and sudden before they are 'ware of us. Then we will show them whether the world is the Pope's to part and grant. They shall see the New World is for those that can occupy with a strong arm. Hey ! 'twill be merry to think how the fat lazy hens will cluck and flutter when the hawk has struck and we are rolling home again, with golden wedges for ballast, and pearls to fill the cracks.'

'But, Frank,' said I, almost breathless at his gigantic project, 'how will you get money to furnish ships for so great a venture ?'

'And how many ships do you think I want ?' exclaimed Drake. 'Do you think I am going to sail away with a whole fleet, like Jack Hawkins, with the Spanish Ambassador looking on and sending word before me ? No, my lads, I know better than that now. I know the thing can be done, and I know how to do it. Just two ships is all I take.'

'What !' cried Harry, 'attack the Indies, attack the choicest possession of the greatest empire in the world with two ships ? You must be mad.'

‘Maybe, maybe, my lad,’ laughed Drake. ‘We shall see who is mād and who is sane before long; but now I mean to sail with just two ships and a pinnace or two for shore work. I have already bespoke in Plymouth the *Pasha*, of seventy tons, for my admiral, and then I will take again my little *Swan*, of twenty-five, for my vice-admiral. She is still staunch, and now knows her way to the Indies better than any ship that floats in English waters. Brother Jack is to be captain in her.’

‘But, for God’s sake, Frank,’ said I, ‘be not so hastily resolved. Think again what you do. It is not hens you fly at. It is a mighty eagle with claws of iron, whose wings stretch over the four quarters of the world.’

‘You may say that too,’ answered he. ‘Yet remember that though the eagle lays her eggs in Jupiter’s lap, still she escapes not requital for her wrong done to the emmet. The Spaniard has foully wronged me, and foully wronged one beside whom I am indeed but an emmet. It is the Lord’s work to do what I say. It can be done, and I am going to do it.’

This he said quietly, without boasting, and with so determined an air of cheerful resolution that I knew no words of ours would turn him from his audacious purpose. So we listened, wondering more and more at the fire of his dauntless spirit, while he unfolded to us every detail of his plan.

‘Would God I could sail with you!’ burst out Harry at last, with kindling eyes.

‘Why not, lad, why not?’ cried Frank, smiting him

on the back in his cheery sea fashion. 'Such lads as you I want. Not a man over thirty years old will I have. It is youth and fire we need. The oldest are too wary, and will not believe I know best. Say now, will you sail and take command of the land-soldiers?'

'Would God I could!' answered Harry mournfully. 'It will be a tale to be told beside the story of Æneas, and sung with the song of the Argonauts. But tempt me not, Frank; I am married now, and must stay to watch over my sweet Nan. My fighting days are over, save at England's need.'

'Well, as you will,' said Drake, very disappointed. 'But you miss a glorious venture; and you will not go either, Jasper?'

'Gladly I would,' said I, 'but each must to the work his hand finds to do, and mine, as you know, is here. My money, as far as my capacity goes, shall be with you, though for profit I would rather have seen it risked in a plain voyage to Guinea after negroes. Yet, since this is the Lord's work which you are on, you shall have what help my purse can yield. But for my body, the Lord has need of that here.'

This was indeed so, as I thought, though had it been otherwise I doubt if then I should have had stomach for Frank's wild enterprise. Mr. Cartwright had already sounded his note against prelatical Church government and all its brood of evils, and had been deprived both of his professorship and his fellowship. Since that time he had been busy with his *Admonition to Parliament*. That clarion-blast, which was to wake a war in England

which seems each day to grow in fierceness, was about to be blown, and seeing how much he looked to me to help him in his great work, and how stormy a controversy he foresaw it would raise, I felt I should not leave his side.

Such was the reason I gave to myself, yet I think my resolve was dictated rather by distaste for the danger of so rash an expedition, and by the closer ties which bound me to England.

Would God I had had strength to give Frank another answer! What sin and misery I might then have been spared, and of how much sorrow brought on those I loved best should I have been guiltless! Yet it was fated that I should have another tale to tell, so let me hasten in shame to the end, which now came quickly.

When Frank left us our lives rolled on in the old ruts again, but deeper than before. Out of his great love for his wife, and his knightly devotion to her, Harry had made a sacrifice greater than we and he guessed in refusing Drake's offer; and seeking to forget it in an unceasing round of work and pleasure, he devoted his time more and more to his sheep and tenants and estate, and sought more eagerly the assemblies of gentlemen where sport was to be had.

As for his wife, she seemed to think now of nothing but good works amongst the poor and reading theology with me. Hour after hour she would pore over Genevan Latin, still her Puritanism grew sterner and sterner. Harry's hunting and bull-baiting and card-playing became more and more distasteful in her eyes, till at

last I think it was all they could see of him ; so that when he came home at nights it was little return he got for the love he was ready to lavish upon her.

Perhaps he was to blame, though I can never see in his most noble life anything that is not praiseworthy. Perhaps if he could have given her a little more and his work a little less, she would have been readier to forgive the manly pleasures he loved in common with every other gentleman of spirit. Yet I think not. I doubt the poison which I, in my self-willed ignorance, administered for a wholesome physic was too strong and deadly for her high-wrought nature.

Soon she would bid none but the poor and preachers to Ashtead, where once she had loved so well to entertain very gallant parties of gentry from the country round, ay, and from London too. Nor would she go abroad to other houses, as she used, with Harry, since she had grown to hate the sports and ungodly conversation and gallantry that went forward at such times.

Above all, there was one house which she hated. It belonged to a Popish gentleman, and was well known to me as a place where there was a great coming and going of strangers, who rode on North Country cobbles, and often spoke with a strong North Country burr. We had not yet forgotten the Catholic risings in the North. The Duke of Norfolk's treasonable practices with Rome for her Majesty's destruction had been but recently brought to light, and he was yet lying a convicted traitor in the Tower, but still unexecuted. Rumours were leaking out or being invented of other great Popish plots for the

subversion of the realm and the making away with the Queen and her ministers. It was no wonder, then, that Harry's constant visits to the house of which I speak caused us no little anxiety, although now I know he went there bent only on pleasure.

It was one of these visits that brought about the end. I had ridden over to Ashtead one afternoon towards the end of April. The morning had been showery—a mirror of England's state at that time, as I thought to myself, a mixture of sunshine and tears.

To my great surprise, instead of finding Mrs. Waldyve bent over some Latin book as usual, she was sitting miserably crouched upon the window seat, wild-eyed and weary, as one that grieved sorely and could not weep. As soon as she heard my step she sprang up with a strange little laugh, and pressed my hand very hard as she spoke.

'Oh, Jasper,' she said, 'I am so glad you are come. I had need of you. Let us come to the orchard, where we can talk alone.'

We went out together and seated ourselves side by side, as we had done many times before, on the bowed limb of an ancient apple-tree which, as though overcome with years, rested, all gnarled and twisted, upon the flowery turf. It was one of the first warm days of spring. The grass was spangled over with primroses, the trees were laden with flowery frost, the choir of the birds was warbling its fullest love-notes, and all was bathed in the soft sunshine of the waning afternoon.

Yet there was nothing for me so beautiful as the

woman who sat by my side, gazing far away over the mellow prospect of field and woodland and river, or so tuneful as the soft murmur that came in rhythmical whisper from her heaving breast.

For a time we sat in silence, and while she gathered strength and calmness to speak, I watched the sunlight playing in her hair and, wondering, tried to read the thoughts that chased each other across her wistful face.

‘Jasper!’ she said at last, turning suddenly on me, ‘whatever comes of it you will not think ill of me? Say you will not.’

I tried to calm and comfort her, and begged her to tell me what her trouble was; but I was afraid to speak much, for a strange fear of her seemed to come over me, and I could not think quietly.

‘When he was going over there, you know where, Jasper,’ she said, ‘the voice of the Lord whispered to me that I must stay him. So I arose and begged him not to go. He patted my cheek, as though I were a child, and laughing, asked me of what I was afraid. Then I told him how we feared for his body, lest he should be drawn into some Popish plot, and, more than that, for his soul, lest he should be tempted to backsliding and so to utter perdition. And what think you he said, Jasper? I shudder to speak it. He patted my cheek, smiling again, and said, “Ah, Nan, ’tis a pity you are grown such a prim little Puritan. But fear not; a Waldyve heart is loyal enough, and as for my soul, why, lass, God—if there is a God that marks these little coils—must be made of better stuff than to damn my soul for

a frolic with a jolly papist or two." Then I knew what he was. I was stricken dumb, and he rode away. Jasper!' she went on, seizing my arm and leaning eagerly towards me, 'he is an atheist! I am married to an atheist! My son is an atheist's son! Oh, my God, what shall I do? He will grow up to mock God, like his father. He will learn to mock at my faith, like Hal. I know it. He will not care for me. Hal wins all to him. What shall I do? Counsel me, brother, for God's sake, or my heart will break. I have no friend but you. Thank God He sent you to me!'

I know not what I said. I could not think of my words, only of her, as she leaned her lithe young figure on my arm and sobbed and sobbed again. A devil came into me with the sunshine, and the warbling of the birds, and the faint scent of the flowers, and at last I dared not speak for dread of what words the fiend had put on my tongue.

So we continued for a space, till suddenly her sobs ceased and she sprang up to her feet before me. I rose too, stepping a little back from her. I dared not go near, for her eyes were glittering, her cheeks flushed, and all in the reddening sun she was a vision too fair for my strength.

'Jasper,' she said quietly, but much excited and trembling, and looking at me very fixedly, 'there is but one way, and the Lord has shown it me. I must go away from here, from him, and take little Fulke away, or he and I and all will be lost for ever. Jasper, you must take us away.'

I started, horror-stricken, to hear from her sweet mouth the very words which the devil had set on my own lips and which I had striven so hard to keep back. I knew then I could not resist much longer. It seemed to me that I must be speaking to a fiend who had taken her angel shape, and my courage for so hopeless a battle began to fail me.

‘Brother,’ it said, coming towards me, ‘you will not fail me. Save me and my boy, your own godson, from perdition. Take me to where he is fostering, and thence whither you will. I care not, so long as I am away from this great trial.’

Her form was close to me; what seemed her little white hands were upon me; two wistful brown eyes like hers were looking up in my face in an agony of pleading. What could I do, what could I do? I had taken the soft form in my arms before I knew and passionately kissed the sweet upturned face. God forgive me for it, when His will is! I was tempted more than I could bear.

CHAPTER XIII

THE ways were very foundrous, and night closed in upon us while we were still on our flight. Ere Harry had returned we had departed and were making for the farm to which little Fulke had been sent with his foster-mother. It was a good distance from Ashtead, being the farthest part of Harry's estate inland, and detached from the rest by a large space. For that reason it had been chosen by him for his boy, that he might be as far as possible away from the marshes, which were held to be pestilent in the spring.

Mrs. Waldyve was riding pillion behind me. A sort of calm had settled upon us with the night, and I picked my way as well as I could through the mud, content to feel her soft arm about me, and know that it was her sweet form that leaned upon me.

Darker and darker gathered the night, and deeper grew the mire. I could no longer see where my horse trod, and had to leave him with loosened rein to find his way as best he could. I think the unwonted weight upon his back must have wearied him, for all at once he stumbled, and we found him stuck up to the girths in a slough.

There was nothing to be done but dismount and lift Mrs. Waldyve off. I sank almost over my boots as I took her in my arms,*but managed nevertheless to set her safely on a firm bank by the side of the road. My next care was to get my horse clear, which at last, with great toil, I did.

Still, we were in a sorry plight. My horse had so laboured in the slough that by the time I had got him free he was strained and weary past all going. Moreover, the clouds had gathered above us in great masses, so that not only was the darkness almost impenetrable, but I had great fear of a heavy downpour of rain.

I know not what would have befallen us had it not been that I was aware of a little inn not far distant, which was used by travellers passing from Rochester towards Maidstone and Tunbridge.

That I could reach it with my horse I did not doubt, but was fearful for Mrs. Waldyve. When, however, I told her how things stood with us I found her so resolved and courageous that I determined to set out forthwith, and in a shorter time than I had hoped we saw the lights of the inn in front of us.

No sooner had we reached shelter than the rain came down in torrents. During the happy dream in which I had ridden, and afterwards in the labour with my horse, I had hardly realised what we were doing. I was reckless, not caring what came so long as I was with her on our journey, away from my old mournful life, as it now seemed to me.

It was clear we must pass the night in the inn. To

go on was not to be thought of. I know not what Mrs. Waldyve thought, but to me it seemed quite natural and easy, though, I confess,* it was with no little comfort that I found there were no travellers there besides ourselves.

Perhaps it is well I cannot write down each thing we said and all that passed that night ; yet I would do it if I could. It seems to me now like a faint dream of some other man's life ; and, try how I will, I can remember little but the bustling hostess setting our supper to a tune of chattering gossip, and after it was cleared leaving us with a cheery 'Good-night to your gentilities.'

I know we sat side by side in the great chimney corner, my arm about her, her hand in mine, talking low, with such soft speech as none but a villain would suffer to pass between him and another man's wife. I know the rain had ceased and the new-risen moon was shining gloriously in between the mullions of the broad low lattice window, almost darkening the dancing firelight, and making a large chequer pattern on the rush-strewn floor.

How long we sat so I cannot tell, no more than how long we should have sat had we not heard the plash of horses' feet in the mud outside. The shadow of a cloaked horseman passed across the bright chequer pattern on the floor, and then another.

We heard them stop, and then a voice that made our hearts stand still hailed the house.

'Holà, house ! Holà, within !' it cried.

'What would ye, gentles ?' cried the voice of the hostess.

‘Slight, to come in, woman. Open quickly,’ said the traveller.

‘Despatch, despatch, Jem,’ cried the landlady. ‘See you not it is a gentleman and his gentleman servant? In good time, your worship. My goodman is in bed. Be patient till he make shift, that we be not shamed, and he shall let you in. Will Ostler, Will Ostler, wake up, you loon, and take the horses! Was ever such luck? Mass! but I knew we should have travellers ever since last Tuesday, when I could not sleep for dreaming of green rushes, and that’s for strangers.’

I could not speak, or stir, or think, but only stand by the hearth and stupidly mark what the shrill voice of the hostess said. Yet I had strength to resolve, come what might, I would not draw my blade.

It seemed an age of silence, broken only by muttered words for a moment without, and then the door burst open, and Harry, covered with mud, strode in with his rapier drawn in his hand and his cloak about his left arm. Culverin followed at his heels, and, slamming the door after him, stood solidly in front of it, while Harry advanced towards us.

There seemed no anger in his face, but rather sorrow and set purpose, as he came quickly forward. I stood where I was, hoping in a moment to feel his point and have an end to all; but Mrs. Waldyve made a sudden movement, half of horror, half as though to protect me.

Harry stopped in a moment with lowered point, and looked at her with a face in which was such a constant love and unspeakable pain as tears my heart to this

hour to think on. Then, setting hard his teeth, he lifted his rapier on high and flung it with all his might crashing through the window into the yard outside.

I heard the clang of the broken glass. I heard the Sergeant's great broadsword come screaming from its sheath. I saw Harry stand trembling with set face, trying in vain to speak with steady voice; and the Sergeant, rigid as a column, at the door with his drawn sword, his naked dagger, and his bristling moustache.

A choking sound came at last from Harry's lips, in which there seemed no trace of his own clear, ringing voice.

'For God's sake, Jasper, bring her back. You know not what you do. You love her not as I do.'

That was all. I think he would have said more, but could not. For a moment he seemed to struggle for words, and then turned and was gone. The Sergeant sheathed his sword with an angry clang, turned on his heel rudely, without a word or salute, and we were alone again in the moonlight.

Then there burst upon me in dazzling light, that seemed to scorch my very soul, the horror of my sin. I saw in a moment how blind I had been. A mad rage at Heaven and all that had made my life seized me. Was it for this I had striven, and denied myself, and lived the life of a monk, when others were dancing, and dicing, and drinking in full content? Was this, after all my toil and wasted youth, the place where my religion had brought me?

So, in wild reaction, my long-pent thoughts, their

bonds burst in sunder, ran riot through my brain, till I heard a horseman dash away through the mud. In hate of Heaven, in hate of myself, I went forth, not knowing what I did.

The cool night air and the pure, soft moonlight seemed to soothe my fever as I stepped into the yard. There lay Harry's rapier, where it had fallen, the hilt buried in the mire, the blade glittering like hope in the silver light.

I know not how the fancy seized me, unless, unknown to myself, I was infected with a foretaste of that sweet sense which since has flowed in such full and tuneful flood from the honeyed lips of Mr. Spenser.

Yet I know, as that rapier lay there so keen and shining, I saw in it a mirror of perfect courage and gentleness, wherein I could look for every rule of life. I saw in it, as it were, the embodied presentment of that noble spirit I had so foully wronged, and I clutched at it in forlorn hope to save me amidst the dark waste of waters that had flowed over every landmark I had known before, and every path I had painfully learned to tread.

Yes, many may think it folly, yet to me it was the devoutest act of my life. I drew my own stained blade, and, setting my foot upon it, snapped it across, and then flung it into the mire as the weapon of a felon knight.

So I kneeled down, and picking up Harry's rapier, like a holy thing, I put it to my lips. For I had an oath to swear, and I swore it aloud on that unsullied

blade, that, come what might, in joy and sorrow, by land and sea, in life and death, I would never, by the help of Harry's memory, do an act that would disgrace the weapon which he had hallowed by true faith, and love, and courtesy, and every knightly virtue.

I kissed the blade again, and, rising up, I put it in my own scabbard. It fitted easily, as though it shunned not its new resting-place. As I looked up I was suddenly aware of Sergeant Culverin standing by my side. His posture was as different as could be from that in which I had last seen him. Soldierly he was as ever, yet the childlike look was on his face behind the fierce moustache, and he was saluting me.

'Has your worship any use for me ere I go?' he said, very respectfully, and drawn up stiffly to his full height.

I could have easily embraced the grim soldier for that salute and those words. In the depth of my degradation, when I so loathed myself that I felt I should never dare to look an honest man in the face again, I found this steadfast soul did not wholly despise me. It seemed to me he was a sign sent, I cannot say from God, for God was no more to me now, but sent by some mysterious power of good that by hazard I had conjured, to bid me hope my vow would be fulfilled.

'Is your horse strong enough to go back to Ashtead?' said I.

'Yes, your worship,' he answered; 'and as far again in a good cause.'

‘Then set the pillion saddle on him,’ said I. The Sergeant’s childlike look grew very apparent and smiling as I spoke. I thought at first he was about to seize my hand, but he restrained himself and only rigidly saluted as he went to do my bidding. So, hopefully and with hardened heart, I went back to the guest chamber of the inn.

She had left the place where I had seen her last, and was sitting in the window, as though she had gone there to look after Harry or me, I knew not which. How beautiful she shone in the moonlight! I can think of it quietly now. The silver flood fell full upon her, and illumined her lovely face and form with so heavenly a radiance in the dark chamber that she seemed to me like some poor angel, weary of worship, who had strayed from heaven. It was as though the eye of some great spirit far away was turned upon her to draw her back to the realms she had left; as though she saw the golden gate whence she came, and, weighed down by the thick and cloying vapours of earth, knew not how to take wing back to the life she had loved and lost.

‘Will you go back to-night,’ said I, ‘or wait for the morning?’

She started then from her reverie, and turned on me her sweet brown eyes, so wistfully and full of reproach as almost to undo me.

‘Must we go back, Jasper?’ she said at last, so submissively and in such beseeching tones that my head swam and my breath came thick. Many a struggle I have had in my changeful life, but never one like that.

It was only my new guardian that won the strife for me. I clapped my hand to Harry's rapier, and, pressing it mighty hard, found strength to say firmly, 'Yes!'

I think she saw what I did, for she stood up with that stony calm which to me is far more terrible than the wildest passion. Once she pressed her little white hands to her eyes, and then drew them slowly away, while I stood watching and waiting for my answer.

'We will go now, Jasper,' she said at last. 'You are right; we must go; but I can never have been to you what you have been to me.'

Her words cut me like the hangman's lash on the back of prisoner unjustly condemned. It was more than I could bear to see her. It was past my strength after these scourging words to choose the path that was so hard and bitter before the one that was so easy and sweet. I felt driven towards her. I sprang forwards to take her tender form in my arms, and cover her reproachful face with passionate kisses; to show her what she had done; to show her what she was to me—more than honour, more than duty, more than all the world; to show her that I loved her.

I was at her side with arms wide open to enfold her; in one last strife with myself I paused, and like a thunderclap to my strained wits the Sergeant's knock rattled out on the door, and I was saved. Clutching the rapier by my side once more, I turned to see the soldier's tall form appear in the doorway.

'Your bidding is done, sir,' said he.

‘Then help Mrs. Waldyve to the saddle,’ said I ;
‘we will walk by her side.’

With hanging head, and never a glance to me, she went with tottering steps to the Sergeant, who lifted her with loving gentleness into the saddle. Then we set forward through the moonlight. Not a word was spoken as we toiled along ; not a sound broke the stillness of the night, save the suck of our boots and the horse’s feet in the mire. So in silence, each communing with his own thoughts, we came in the first gray glimmer of the dawn to Ashted, and in silence parted.

CHAPTER XIV

How the next day passed with me I cannot say. I spent it, I know, in my library, pacing up and down and thinking over and over again of all that had happened since last the sun rose.

I remember angrily putting away the divinity books which lay on my table, and taking down others at random. But they would not speak to me as they used, or perhaps I could not hear them for the din of self-reproach in my head.

Many times I tried to think what lucky chance it was that brought Harry to the inn; but I could not guess, nor did I ever know, till the Sergeant told me he came there by hazard, on his way from the Popish gentleman's house, for a cup of spiced wine, because they were wet, and seeing in the stable my horse and his wife's pillion-saddle, had guessed the bitter truth, which the hostess speedily confirmed.

After a heavy night's rest had soothed me I arose at a late hour, and saw things more clearly. I took down my *Phædo Platonis*, and read in it till I began to see right from wrong again. Gradually it seemed to me that there was but one thing to do. I would ride over

to Ashtead once more, see Harry, and tell him I was going away, I knew not for how long or where, but to some land in which I could learn the lesson his travels had taught him. So I would crave his pardon in years to come, and take my leave of all I loved.

It was towards evening that I slowly crossed the park and came to the little wicket that opened into the pretty Italian garden which Harry had made for his wife. There I tied my horse, as I had often done before, and entered.

The terraces on either hand, where in grotesque solemnity the cognisance of his house frowned from many a half-hidden pedestal, were ablaze with the first flowers of spring. Celandine, fritillary, flower-de-luce, and all were there, like pretty laughing maids who knew their beauty and waywardly transgressed the trim stone mouldings, within which their luxuriance could not be content. From a wide-mouthed dragon's head the water spouted with a pleasant tinkle into the glassy basin that occupied the midst; the little trout that played there were springing merrily for the evening flies; whilst from the ivy and honeysuckle that was fast covering the enclosing walls, and from the blossom-laden pear trees in the orchard hard by, the birds were singing the requiem of the dying day.

At the end towards the house, between two vases that overflowed with woodruff, a flight of steps led upwards to the grassy terrace before Mrs. Waldyve's parlour. One lattice of her bow window was open, and as I mounted the steps I could hear the low sound of singing

within. Very sad it came to me amidst the gay carolling of the birds ; so sad, that I could not choose but go softly across the little velvet lawn and peep between the mullions.

Ah, what a sight was there ! Rocking herself to and fro in her chair miserably sat Mrs. Waldyve, with hair and dress disordered. Her face was pale, her eyes hollow with weeping, and on her knees slumbered her little son. As though there was no world but in that small peaceful face, she leant over it and now and again touched the tiny brow with her lips. Singing ever the same mournful song, she rocked herself and leaned over the baby.

I could hear the words she sang—some which her grief had made for her—and as I listened I cursed all in heaven and earth, and above all myself. For thus, she sang a lullaby to her son :—

‘ Sleep, baby, sleep, for so thou canst,
Thou hast no sins to shrive ;
Lully, lully, my babe, hope is not dead,
Love keepeth hope alive.

‘ Sleep, baby, sleep, he will come back,
Back, honey-sweet, to the hive ;
Lully, lully, my babe, love is not dead,
Thou keepst love alive.’

Those words told me true what had befallen. I should have known well enough, even had it not been for the letter she held crushed in her hand, and kissed, as I watched her. It was easy to guess what it said,

though I could not read the words. Years after I saw it again. She herself showed it me, long afterwards, when all was healed. It still bore witness then how she had crushed it in her grief; it was still blistered with her tears. And this is what was written there:—

To Mrs. WALDYVE, my own sweet Wife.

You shall receive, dear wife, my parting words in these my parting lines. If I ever held your love, as indeed I think I did, it was by the poor things my sword had done. Now I go, I know not whither, to see if haply I may win it again to me beyond the seas, or at least forget a little of what I have lost.

My love I leave you, though I know it is a little thing to you, yet hoping, when I am gone, you will find some place for it, if only it be when you kneel to pray for our boy.

I would not that my last gift should be reproaches, dear Nan. Such are not for me, seeing it was by my own short-coming that I could not keep your love. But first I send you all the thanks my heart can conceive or my pen express for your many cares and troubles taken for me, whom unworthy you strove to love.

And secondly, I would commend to you my poor child, for his father's sake, whom in his happiest times I trow you loved and would have loved still had he been worthy.

I cannot write much,—God knows how hardly I wrote even thus far. The everlasting, infinite, universal God, that is goodness itself, keep you and yours, have mercy on me, and teach me to forgive those who have wronged me; amongst whom, believe me, Nan,—from my heart, I hold you not one. My wife, farewell. Bless my poor boy, pray your all-conquering prayers for him. My true God hold you both in His arms.—Your most loving, unworthy husband,

HARRY WALDYVE.

From Rochester, *this 30th day of April 1572.*

I cannot but rejoice that I then knew no more of that letter than that by her kissing of it it was from him, and by the words of her song that it told how he was gone. My heart was already so seared and torn with shame at my work that, had I known how pathetic was his farewell, how deep and noble his sorrow, how touching his self-reproaches, and his straining in the anguish of his misery after the lost faith of his childhood, I know not how I should have borne the pain.

What to do now I could not think. To go in to her was impossible. As she sat there grieving with her baby upon her knees and the letter in her hand, she seemed to me a holy thing, more purely sanctified in her motherhood and grief to him she had lost than ever was vestal to her goddess. All faith and reverence I thought had left me, yet I could have worshipped that mother and child as devoutly as ever a poor Papist bowed before the Virgin's shrine. Still there was a holiness about them I dared not profane, even with my worship. I felt a thing too unclean even to stand on the steps of the altar where she was now enshrined, and I crept away like the guilty thief I was.

Hardly less difficult was it to go and leave her alone in the desert I had made of the fair garden, where but for me she might have dwelt so happily. To go was cowardly; it was sacrilege to stay. I had no guide to show me my way, no friend whom I could consult. Wearily, rather drifting than with any set purpose, I descended the steps, passed by the tinkling water,

through the perfume-laden air, closed the wicket behind me, and so rode home, my errand undone.

He was gone! I knew not whither; and there was no one of whom I could seek counsel. I would have gone to Mr. Drake to tell him all and seek comfort, but the thought of the good man's hard Calvinism repelled me now. He would not understand. As for Mr. Cartwright, he was still less to be thought of. For very shame, I dared not confess to his holy ears the depth to which I had fallen, even could I have hoped for sympathy from him. No, there was none to ease me of my burden.

He was gone; and I must follow,—follow and bring him back to her, and then rid them for ever of my accursed presence. That was all I could think of. And on the morrow, after committing my affairs to old Miles's hands, I rode to Gravesend, and so came next day by river to London, whither I heard from the boatmen he had gone.

As I have said, I came to London drifting, rather than with any set purpose. As soon as I had sought for Harry at my Lord of Bedford's, and at the lodging where he was wont to lie when in London, and found no news of him, I was at a loss what to do. I had no friends in London that I knew of, nor was I so much as acquainted with any there except my merchant and old Mr. Follet, who had a lodging in Warwick Court, where he was of easy access to his scholars, both those about the Court and those who were sons to wealthy citizens.

To him I was resolved to go, not so much in hope to

hear of Harry, as trusting in my forlorn state to receive comfort from him, when I remembered how peaceful and content was his life, and yet without any comfort of religion that I was ever able to discover.

I found him polished and kindly and gentle as ever, and bound still in willing servitude to his 'Apology.' He welcomed me very warmly, refusing any denial that I would sup with him. Our first commendation over, he fell to asking me of my life and work, so that we easily came to talk of those deep matters wherein my trouble lay.

'I cannot but rejoice, my dear Jasper,' said the old scholar, bending on me his intelligent, clear eyes, 'that you have come to your present state. It was always my desire that you should see that as a rule or touchstone of right living, nay, if you will, as a *virgula divina*, or divining rod, whereby to discover the pure water of life, religion is in no comparison with scholarship. So long as men shall pursue religion as a chief end, so long shall they be ever athirst and rage in these present fevers that now be. I hold there are three special points in education, or the leading forth of life, the same being, truth in religion, honesty in living, and right order in learning. I name them in the order in which the three are now commonly held, yet you know, as I do, that in order of excellence these points should be reversed.'

'Then you would not have a scholar,' said I, 'lay aside religion altogether?'

'I see no need for that,' he answered. 'It was not

so in the past golden days of scholarship, before Reformation violently killed the old kindly tolerance of the Romish Church. Side by side they could not exist, so Rome grew hard perforce, and Geneva as hard to withstand her. And so the good old days were ended, even the days when a man would first take heed that his order of learning was rightly governed according to the precepts of the immortal Stagirite, from which, secondly, would flow, by the bestowing of such leisure as remained, a sufficient honesty in living, the whole being sweetened and tempered with such truth of religion as came of itself, without straining, out of the other two. It is this straining after God that so troubles the world and burns up scholarship. They draw the Ardour of Heaven too near, whereby the inflammable principles, whereof He is in a great measure composed, so heat men's blood and set their stomachs on fire, that cool scholarship itself is set in a blaze, and serves but to feed the fires of controversy, whereby learning, honesty, and religion itself are fast being consumed.'

'Surely, then, it were better,' said I, 'to shut out this disturbing element that makes life so turbid; better to deafen our ears to this note which sets all our harmony awry.'

'No, Jasper,' answered Mr. Follet, 'that is impossible. That far-off note is your octave, as Pythagoras taught. You, with your spiritual nature, will always hear it sounding in unison with that which you yourself are making as you live your life. If there is discord in your ears, it is that you are sounding some

other note awry between your fundamental earthly note and His in the empyrean. By your scholarship I judge your first harmony must be *dia-trion* to the orbit of Mercury, which is science; and thus, if you would have concord, your next must be *dia-pente* to the orbit of Mars, which is manhood and knightly adventure. So can you reach through your full *dia-pason* to God, and sound your third and just fifth in complete and peaceful harmony with the universe. So I would advise you, if the music of your life has seemed meagre. But, above all, beware of the fourth, which is the orbit of Venus, that shall bring you nothing but most jarring discord, wherein you shall find no rest.'

The old man looked out at me from his clear eyes so shrewdly that, although I could only guess at his meaning, I felt he had divined the true cause of my discomfort. How far he had learned it I cannot say, yet I could not help calling to mind the many times I had written to him concerning my most pleasant studies with Mrs. Waldyve. I found in my old tutor a strange mingling of shrewd worldly knowledge and unreal speculation which drew me nearer to him than I had ever had wit to be in my boyhood. It is true I hoped to get little help from his medley of philosophies, yet his conversation fascinated me in spite of the half-mystic vagueness that seemed to be growing on him with his old age, and I stayed with him till a late hour.

Whether right or wrong for others, his own way of thought had brought him to an old age of profound

peace, most enviable to me in the tempestuous flood of doubt that had overwhelmed my life since the dams of my faith, which I had deemed so secure, had burst. Moreover, his whole discourse was so seasoned with spicery from the writings of the ancients, and above all his beloved Aristotle, that it was very pleasant to hear, though beyond what my memory will bear to write.

Moreover I wished to speak with him about his 'Apology,' which he had not once mentioned. No one but myself can truly know how great must have been his sympathy with my troubled state, or how much he must have denied himself to minister to it, when for two hours he never once spoke of his manuscript. At last, moved to pity because of his exceeding kindness, I asked him how it fared.

'Bravely, bravely, my dear discipulus,' said he with beaming face. 'It has been long in getting set forth because of the great growth which it has attained by reason of the weighty arguments I continually found. Still the day for the great purging of scholarship is very near. I am near to finishing the Latin text, in which form I have been weightily advised the work should appear, although I had purposed otherwise for the glory of the English tongue. The Right Honourable the Earl of Bedford has promised to receive the dedicatory epistle, so that I doubt not, with so noble and learned a sponsor, my child shall find an honourable reception in the courts of science.'

This and much more to like purpose he spoke till I

took my leave, much comforted by his kindness, yet little relieved of my inward sickness.

Lashmer, who had been passing the time of my visit with Mr. Follet's servant, came to my chamber as usual to untruss me when we reached our lodging. He seemed full of something, which after a little painful repressing he poured forth.

'Did your worship hear whither he had gone?' asked he.

'Whither who had gone?' said I.

'Was not your worship seeking news of Mr. Waldyve?' he asked again.

'Certes, I was,' said I; 'but that is no concern of yours.'

'No, sir, none,' he answered, 'save that I hold all that concerns you concerns your faithful servant; but since it is not so, let it pass.'

So he fell into a sullen silence, till I, feeling he held news, could refrain no longer from asking what he meant.

'Nay, I meant nothing, sir,' said he. 'A gentleman's movements are nothing to me; but since I thought Mr. Follet would have told you whither he had gone, I made bold to inquire; for he was ever a most kind gentleman to me; but since there is offence in it, let it pass.'

'But what made you think Mr. Follet should know this?' I asked sharply.

'Nay, sir, I pray you let it pass. I have no longer desire to know what concerns me not.'

‘But I have desire to know what you meant, sirrah.’

‘Then, saving your displeasure, it was a foolish idle whim of mine, that am but a dunce and unlearned, to think that since Mr. Waldyve was with Mr. Follet yesterday he would have given your worship news of him. It was a stupid, foolish fancy, so I pray you let it pass.’

‘Mr. Waldyve with Mr. Follet yesterday, say you?’ I cried, as soon as I recovered breath. ‘Why, how know you this, Lashmer?’

‘Nay, I know it not,’ said he, making occasion of my anxiety to have revenge for my sharpness.

‘What a plague makes you say it then?’

‘Why, sir, because Mr. Follet’s man knows it, and Mr. Follet’s man told me how Mr. Waldyve was with his master for the space of two hours save a thimbleful of sand yesterday about supper-time, during all which time he had to wait, for good manners’ sake, though like to die of a watery mouth for thinking of a roasted rabbit and a dish of prunes that were bespoke for him and two other blades at the “Portcullis” tavern hard by.’

‘Pace! pace! draw rein on your galloping tongue, good Lashmer, and tell me whither he has gone.’

‘If I could, sir, but I cannot; nor Mr. Follet, nor Mr. Follet’s man neither, for in truth he told none of them anything, save that they were not like to see him for a good space to come.’

‘Then leave me, Lashmer, and good-night. Go to

your bed now, and find a kind thought for a heart-sick master.'

'Heaven save your worship, and pardon a malapert servitor,' said Lashmer, and left me to my thoughts.

First, I think, I pondered over Mr. Follet's great tenderness with me, when as I felt he must have known all. Then I tried to come to conclusions with myself what I was to do. The more I pondered the more it seemed useless to search farther for Harry, and the more I dwelt on what Mr. Follet had said to me of sounding the note of Mars's orbit as a cure for my discords.

I felt shamed, moreover, to think that my old tutor knew all. I felt I could no more go back and face him; nay, I felt as though every one knew my shame, and a desire grew in me to fly far away from it all. I began to reason with myself as to what good end it would serve to find Harry, and now it seemed that even if I could find him I dared not face him. My bold resolves were melting to cowardice in the heat of my remorse, and utterly purposeless and alone I crept with a broken spirit to my bed.

CHAPTER XV

NEXT day I stayed within all the morning. Harry was in London, and though I had come thither to seek him, I dared not stir abroad for fear of meeting him. I dined in my lodging, sending Lashmer to the tavern for a quart of claret.

The food and the wine must have put new heart in me ; for after they were done I sallied forth alone, resolved to prosecute my search. Still dreading success, I wandered eastward along the Strand. Many gallants, most splendid with new-fashioned hats and hose, were loitering along the way I went. I followed the stream, and so, passing Temple Bar and over the Fleet Bridge, I came through Ludgate before St. Paul's Church.

I stood a while admiring the grandeur of the front and the lofty tower. For then, being untravelled, I was unlearned in architecture, and saw not how rude were its proportions and barbarous its ornament beside the new style.

Many gallants went by me as I watched, laughing, and passed on into the church. Harry had often told me how it was a place of great resort, so I followed, thinking perhaps to find what I looked for and dreaded to see.

The floor of the long and lofty nave was thronged with gallants and would-be gallants, strolling up and down, and laughing and talking with one another; while between the piers of clustered columns which supported the soaring roof-groins and dim triforium knots of men were gathered, who seemed for the most part to be merchants. From time to time I could see a bond or account-book fluttering white amidst their sober robes, but all was done with as little noise and bustle as could well be.

For it must be known that Paul's was not then the den of thieves it is now. It was not so long since the Queen's proclamation had been issued against such as should transact business, or make any fray, or shoot any hand-gun or dag within the precincts. It was still had in memory, though little regarded, and the place was not wholly disorderly.

Yet was it sufficiently out of order to see so gay a company glowing in their bright clothes of 'popinjay blue,' 'devil-in-the-head,' 'lusty gallant,' and I know not what other outlandish new-fashioned hues, and to hear their laughter rolling round the gray old walls, and the clink of their spurs and rapiers on the pavement, and the rustle of their silks and taffeta as they walked.

Wrapped as I was in myself, and shut off by my shame from all men, that thoughtless throng only made my sense of loneliness keener. Far more in sympathy with me than any creature there was the tall temple itself, which, stripped long since of all its altars and Popish

adornments, seemed to look down in lofty contempt upon the irreverent crowd which insulted its ancient dignity. Solemn and sad and alone it seemed to wait in patient confidence for the day when their little paltry lives would have passed away to oblivion, and its days of worship would come again.

That there were many there more loyal with their tongues than in ought else I could see as I went forward and came near Duke Humphrey's tomb. Here the proclamation seemed wellnigh forgotten. Round the battered effigy the throng was thicker and full of ruffling loud-voiced swaggerers, who, from their ruffianly carriage and most vile Smithfield oaths, made me think their gentility much belied the bravery of their clothes. It was a thing I then first noted, and have since much grieved over, that men of low station nowadays take to wearing garments of gentleman's cut, no matter how common or ill-made, so long as they be as good as their scrapings, or stealings, or borrowings will buy.

Not wishing to mingle with this lewd throng I turned aside between the columns, that I might so pass into the aisle and avoid them. But before I could carry out my purpose I felt myself hustled roughly into the aisle by some one who thrust violently by me.

'Body of Bacchus!' said a loud, gruff voice, 'know you not better, base countryman, than to hustle a gentleman so?'

I turned and saw glaring at me a tall ruffian whom I had noted in the throng. He was dressed in garish and faded garments very vilely pinked and guarded, and

wore on his head a most desperate hat. As though to give him a warlike note, his clothes were thrown on in a slovenly way, and his moustache frowned out so shock and bristling that it seemed from each hair-end a crackling oath must start with every word he said. I felt little inclined for a brawl, least of all in that place, though to quarrel with any man would perhaps have been a comfort in my present state ; so I civilly told him I was sorry to have stood in his way.

‘What, base minion!’ said he very fierce, with a whole *fusilada* of oaths, ‘think you to pass so lightly from a gentleman’s wrath?’

‘I pray you, sir, be content,’ I replied as quietly as I could, for it seemed very silly to quarrel with such a mountebank. ‘If I wronged your gentility it was unwittingly, and I crave your pardon.’

‘Stay, rude rustic,’ said he, stepping before me as I turned away, and clapping his hand to a rapier of extravagant length. ‘This shall not serve you. Craving of pardons shall not serve you, nor your *pardonnez-mois* neither. A gentleman must have satisfaction by rule and circumstance, after the teaching of the inestimable Signor Rocco.’

I found myself by this time hemmed in by a throng of his fellows, as ruffianly and hectoring as himself, none of whom I dare have sworn could ever have afforded so much as their noses inside Signor Rocco’s ‘College,’ so I thought best to make an end.

‘Come then, sir,’ said I, ‘to a fitting place, and I will presently give you your desire.’

‘Nay, but first name your friends,’ my opponent replied. ‘For know, base scullion, that town-bred gentlemen fight by rule and circumstance, and not like two rams in field, without supporters.’

‘Yes, pretty shepherd,’ cried the throng jeeringly, ‘name first your friend, if you want a gentleman to walk with you.’

I now saw my evil case and what a trick was put on me, and knew not what to do. To draw my rapier, Harry’s rapier, on this vermin was farthest from my thoughts. Yet the throng hustled me closer, and my bully swaggered and threatened loudly.

‘I have no friend here,’ said I, ‘unless any gentleman among you will stand by me.’

‘Hark to the scurvy rustic,’ they cried, in answer to my look around to them. ‘A pox on your familiarity. You will get no friend here.’

‘Nay, my dry-livered lubbers, that he will,’ cried a clear jolly voice, and I turned to see Frank Drake and another gentleman break through the throng to my side. ‘What is it, Jasper? Stand back, ye lubberly porpoises, and give a seaman sea-room.’

‘Stand back, I pray you, gentlemen,’ cried my bully very condescending; ‘I knew not that I spoke with a friend of Captain Drake’s.’

‘Or maybe you would not have spoken so loud, my pot-valiant Hercules,’ said Frank’s friend.

‘What is all the coil about, Jasper?’ said Frank again, while my bully tried to outstare the gentleman.

‘Tis nothing,’ said I. ‘He wanted two friends for

me, to help give him satisfaction for having been at the pain of jostling me.'

'Give him a tester, sir,' said Frank's friend, 'to buy sack withal. That is the best satisfaction for his most barrel-bellied worship.'

'No, gentlemen,' said my bully with great pomp, finding he could not outstare his new adversary, 'it is satisfaction enough to know the gentleman is a friend of the most valiant Captain Drake. I know of no quarrel here that a skin of muscadine will not assuage. I pray you, let me conduct you to a very honest tavern hard by where I am known, and where I will see you served with the best.'

'Most courtly offered!' said the gentleman. 'And peradventure your most sweet honesty will see us served also with very honest dice and very honest cards. 'Tis a pity we are promised elsewhere, but so it is, and we must perforce pray your valourship to bestow on us instead a full measure of your most delectable absence.'

'By the soul of Bacchus,' said the bully, swelling with contempt, 'were it not for the proclamation, blood should flow for this ;' but we all laughed at him, and he strode away with his nose in the air, as proud as Alexander after Granicus. So we were rid of him and his fellows, who followed on his heels all growling, 'Were it not for the proclamation,' and swearing like drovers between their teeth.

'A happy meeting, Jasper,' said Frank. 'Yonder go as arrant a lot of thieves as any in all London. Be better acquainted with my friend, Mr. John Oxenham.

A fellow-adventurer, Oxenham, Mr. Festing, but not, to my grief, a shipmate.'

'Pity you will not sail with us, Mr. Festing,' said Mr. Oxenham with a winning courtesy of manner. 'A man who can stand up to a throng of swaggerers like that should try his hand on Spaniards.'

'Why, so he has,' cried Frank, 'and to their cost; but now he will be doing nothing but ram home most portentous charges of words into paper ordnance with a quill rammer. Heaven knows what giants they will bring down when they go off!'

We all laughed together, for I cannot say what it was to me to meet these two in the midst of my loneliness. I gladly accepted their invitation to a tavern, where we could talk in peace. For not only was I overjoyed to be with Frank again, but I was much taken with Mr. Oxenham.

He was a tall, well-dressed man with a very handsome face, and such courageous eyes that I did not wonder they had daunted the Paul's man. 'Tis true I should have liked him better had it not been for an amorous look he wore over all his manliness. Yet who was I to judge him for that? His talk was very pleasant, for he had been a rover from his youth, and spoke of what he had seen freely, without boasting. We sat drinking a long time, and talked of the glories of the West and a sailor's life, for which he had conceived a romantic enthusiasm.

'Ah, Mr. Festing,' burst out Mr. Oxenham at last 'it is a pity you will not sail with us to the West,

since you are bent on travel. I envy you your learning in these things, but none who have not seen can picture their glory. Compared with them, to potter about Europe from one pestered town to another, from one crowded country to another, is like the paddling of a duckling in a puddle beside the everlasting flight of the god-like albatross, that never lights, not even for love. This old world is gray, and worn, and stifling. Over there it is all colour and sunlight and freedom; where the golden land brings forth without labour, and he who will may pass through and enjoy. Why, when once you come to that Paradise where all is so wide and fresh and lovely, you lift your hands in wonder, as you look back to this dull corner far away, that your life can ever have been so little as to come within the bounds of such a prison; you shall hardly believe there was ever room here for aught large enough to cause a moment's grief or joy for your expanded soul. There you can see Nature and know at last what beauty is. There at last you shall drink her fragrant breath, feel the richness of her warm embrace, revel in the azure and rose colour and golden sheen that make up her divine beauty, and lie in her arms to know at last what it means to say, "This is delight."

'And think, lad,' cried Frank, who hardly, I think, can have seen with Mr. Oxenham's eyes, 'think that it is Spaniards who have ravished this rich beauty. It is these idolatrous hell-hounds of Antichrist who have possessed this Shulamite woman whom the Lord had reserved as a bride for his saints. It will be a glorious smiting of them. Their lust has made them sleepy

and womanish. They are puffed up into silly security with their Spanish pride. Why, man, they will leave whole estates in charge of one slave, and send out trains of a hundred Indians or more laden with gold with but a single negro over them. I know it all now. I know every way in and out, and every course and time their ships will sail, and I know harbours, lad, where none could ever find us, where we can lie in wait and pounce out like cats on the good things that come by. And then they have not a walled town on the coast, that I know of. We can swoop down on the Dons and be away again, made men, or ever they have time to wake up out of their beds. Why will not men see what there is to be done, if they will only do? One such stroke as I have in mind will do more to undo Antichrist than all your thinking. Yet you scholars will not see it, but will not cease your idle disputing and dreaming till the angels shall come down and cry to you in voice of thunder, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven?"'

His words struck me very deep, and I began to see how idle was our scholars' contempt for men of action. So, with ever-growing interest, I listened as we talked together till long after supper, and Frank unfolded every detail of his plan in his honest practical way. Mr. Oxenham, moreover, ceased not to paint his glowing pictures not only of what was known of those regions, but also of the fairyland beyond, where no Christian had yet trod,—the unknown lands where he set my fancy playing with his till my imagination, on which I had

already heaped so much that was inflammable from my books, was all on fire.

As for my reason, Frank's sound sense was enough to satisfy that, and his taunt at my standing still and gazing up into heaven while others were doing touched my pride nearly. What wonder, then, that when the time came to bid them good-night, when I saw before me my lonely lodging, when I pictured the blank morrow and all my life beyond, empty of hope or joy or fellowship, when they urged me once more most earnestly to sail with them, that I could not resist!

They were pressing on me the very course in which I could follow Mr. Follet's strangely-worded advice more fully and nobly than I had ever dreamed. In place of my faith a sense of destiny seemed to have come to me, and to be speaking clearly in this chance meeting. If there was anything in man's harmony with the music of the spheres, sure it was the wild adventurous war-note of the universal gamut that I heard far off in the height of heaven sounding low and clear for my soul's response.

My quest for Harry was forgotten, and with it whatever else tied me to the old life, which now began to seem but a body of death. For that strange voice had come over the wide ocean and whispered its witching summons in my ear also. I could not choose but obey.

So we three joined hands and drank a cup on my resolve, and one more was added to the throng who day by day were leaving all to taste the ripe lips of this New Helen in the West.

CHAPTER XVI

It was arranged that I should go out as gentleman adventurer; and since I did not wish to be without place, and had some little knowledge of business, gained by always managing my own estate so as to make it yield the fullest return, I begged and got the office of merchant to the expedition.

I was soon tried in my new post, for Frank was earnest to get back to Plymouth to speed the fitting out of the ships and the building of the pinnaces, which we were to carry with us in pieces. So I was left to purchase the arms and other furniture which was still lacking. This had been the only occasion of his staying in London, which being left in my hands he was free to depart, and this he accordingly did, taking Mr. Oxenham with him.

From my constant fear of meeting Harry, which was greater than ever since I had resolved to fly, I stirred abroad no more than my business demanded.

Yet I was obliged often to go into the city, for there was still a great deal to be done. Money was in no way lacking, both by reason of the success of Frank's two former voyages, which had lined his pockets well,

and of the support he got elsewhere. Nothing was to be wanting from the complete furniture of a man-of-war in either ship ; and our captain, who, both on his person and his ship, would always have the best, had furnished me with a long schedule of muskets, calivers, targets, pikes, partisans, bows, and artificers' tools, as well as cloth and other provision for a whole year, all of which things I was bidden to purchase of different merchants as far as possible, that no wind of our preparations should be blown into the Spanish ambassador's ears.

Such time as I was not thus engaged I spent very profitably in Signor Rocco's new College of Fence in Warwick Lane. I had learned that Harry did not resort thither, so, since it was near my lodging, I was able to enjoy my best-loved pastime and see much excellent rapier-play that was new to me, whereby the pain of my delay in London was a little eased.

Thus by avoiding other public places, and above all Paul's, at the end of a fortnight I found my work complete without the meeting I dreaded ; and with a lighter heart than I had borne for many a day I took ship at Radcliffe with all my lading, and so came to Plymouth after a slow passage on the afternoon of Friday, the 23d of May.

The three brothers, for Joseph Drake was of the expedition as well as John, received me with open arms, and much commended my pains when the arms and furniture came to be stowed on board. They informed me that as merchant I was to sail in the admiral with Frank, of which I was very glad.

It seemed that everything was prepared, and that, as they had only stayed for my coming, we were to weigh on the morrow. Nothing could have been more to my mind. So eager was I to leave my old life behind that I hardly accepted their invitation to go ashore to gather the men who were yet to come aboard. Yet I did at last for good-fellowship, and started with them to the sound of a demi-culverin and a flourish of our trumpets, for a signal to the mariners to embark.

As we rowed I saw another boat making for the *Swan*, which lay a good way from the *Pasha*. They hailed us as we passed, so that I knew they were some of our company; but I could not notice them much, for Frank just then took occasion to point out Mount Edgecombe to me and I looked the other way.

Our passage from tavern to tavern to beat up the stragglers was like a triumph. Indeed I think Plymouth was then, and maybe still is, flat drunk with the western wine. A crowd followed on our heels, cheering us as we went; the citizens came out from their suppers to pledge us lustily with brimming tankards; and as for smiles of hostesses and wenches in the taverns I had enough showered on myself alone, being a gentleman adventurer in the expedition, as would wellnigh satisfy a regiment of horse a whole campaign, as such things go now.

What with these oglings and smirking of the pretty Plymouth lasses and our constant pledgings, I could have been as jolly as any piece of tar-yarn there had it not been for the grievous sights I saw, and our pain

therefrom in getting our men aboard, though I think a very willing crew.

Most had pledged once or twice too often, and were for ever taking leave and never departing ; some could not have gone if they had been willing, at least not on their own legs ; others were in pledge, for commodities they had never seen, to coggng hosts, who held their boots or sword or breeches as security. Some even we could by no means come at, save by help of a magistrate's warrant to search some dishonest alehouse.

Frank told me what I saw was of no account by the side of what sometimes happened.

'Why, lad,' said he, 'I have known it take two days and all the magistrates in the borough to gather a company, and then not see it done. Nay, it is not an unheard-of thing for this scandal to be the utter overthrow of a voyage, and general undoing of owners, victuallers, and company. Mine are all picked lads, or you should not have seen us come off so easily.'

'I marvel,' said I, and I still do, 'that some among our great lord-admirals have not taken order to end these things, which seem a great scandal to the reputation of our sea-service no less than an injury to the commonwealth, and ought to be reformed.'

'That is well enough,' answered Frank, 'and much to be wished ; but to keep a mariner at such times from his ale is a thing more lightly attempted than easily accomplished.'

Mr. Oxenham was little help to us. Indeed he had so many pouting lips to kiss in this his own fair town

of Plymouth, and so many dainty waists to encircle, that I began to think nothing but a warrant or a file of pikes would ever get him aboard.

Still it was done at last, and the sun rose gloriously next morning upon us with our company complete. It was Whitsunday Eve, and the whole town seemed to have made holiday to bid us God-speed that sunny May morning.

It was a fair sight to see the hills around in their fresh spring garb crowding down to the harbour, which seemed to spread out its shining arms to embrace them. The Hoe was thronged with a great mass of people in their gayest clothes; every point beside was bright with colour, and a score of small fry were cleaving the clear waters about us.

We stood off and on awhile to give them a good sight of us, and bid the fair town 'Farewell' with our great pieces and our music. I think Frank was very proud of his ships, and well he might be, for never can have been a smarter sight in Plymouth harbour than we were that day as we beat to and fro with our great flags of St. George at the main-tops, and our silk streamers down to the blue water, and now and again a white puff from our castles as we answered the ordnance from the platforms saluting us.

Cheer after cheer went up from the shore folk between each discharge till we could no longer hear them, and stood out to sea, fairly started at last on that most memorable adventure. I say memorable, for surely never was so great a service undertaken with so small a

power. We were, men and boys, all told, but seventy-three souls, being forty-seven in the admiral and twenty-six in the vice-admiral, under John Drake, and only one of us all that was not under thirty.

The wind was very favourable at north-east, and we stood on all that day and next night. In the morning when I came on deck I found we were going under easy sail, only a cable's length from our vice-admiral. A boat was towing alongside of us, and I saw that some one must have come aboard from the *Swan*.

I went aft to our captain's cabin to see what it might mean. I knocked at the door. Frank's cheery voice bade me enter. I opened and went in. Heaven save me from such a moment again! My heart stood still, my brain swam, for there beside Frank sat Harry, with Sergeant Culverin at his back!

He sprang to his feet as I shut the door behind me, and stood glaring at me with his hand on his rapier.

'Sit down, Harry!' cried Frank; 'I will have no brawling here.'

Harry took no notice, but stood with his breath coming very fast and hard just as before.

'Sit down, sir,' thundered our captain; 'wilt mutiny in my own cabin? Hark ye, sir, on my ship there is no difference between a gentleman and a cook's boy when it comes to giving orders. Sit down now, and take your hand from that weapon, or I shall presently take order to have you in irons.'

'You are right, Frank, quite right,' said Harry with

an effort as he slowly sat himself down. 'But how can you have done us this unkindness?'

'Frank, Frank,' said I, finding voice at last, 'you know not what you have done.' With that I tottered to the seat on the opposite side of the table to Harry. I felt undone and crushed. My long grieving and much brooding on my shame had told on me more than I guessed. And now to find after my cowardly flight I had fallen into a trap a hundredfold more dreadful than that I had sought to escape, to find my new hopes shattered at a blow and this awful trial before me, was more than I could bear, and in utter broken despair I buried my face in my arms upon the table to hide my tears.

'I know well enough what I have done,' said Frank, after he had left us thus in silence for some moments. 'Do you think that when two good lads, fast friends, come to me each separately from the side of one fair lady, haggard and woe-begone, and tell me that they want to journey they care not whither, so long as it be far from England, do you think then I know not what it means? Why, man, I have a score such aboard now. For though many think that the greater the thief and blasphemer the better the soldier, yet say I for my work give me, next to him who sails for love of God, the honest lad that sails for love of a lass. As I judge they are half and half aboard our ships now. So think you I could not read the old tale, when I saw it writ so plain? And had it not been so, I should yet have known; for there comes to me an honest worthy soldier who knew better than I.

“Captain Drake,” says he, “here is a mighty storm blowing between two valiant gentlemen, who after long and loving consort have parted company, so that they cannot come together again without most nice navigation. I pray you take command,” says he.

“How do they bear, Sergeant?” says I.

“Cry you mercy there, captain,” says he; “I am no pilot of gentlemen’s quarrels, yet I can give you certain just observations, whence peradventure you may take their bearings yourself.”

Therewith Frank repeated the whole story as he had it from the Sergeant, till he came to Harry’s flight from the inn. Then in a low earnest voice he told clearly, as though it were passing before his eyes, what the Sergeant had seen me do outside with Harry’s rapier. I felt so shamed to hear it now that I would have stayed him, but felt I could not speak.

‘So, gentlemen,’ said our captain, when he ended the tale, ‘I knew it was a quarrel that might be healed, and knew nothing more sovereign in such a case than the lusty sea. I have known many so healed, when they get far away and see what a little thing it is they wrestled for, beside the prizes a brave lad can win over sea. That is what I have done, and I know I am right; and if you be true men, I would have you shake hands before you leave this cabin.’

The sound of Harry’s hard breathing had ceased as Frank got on with his tale, and since he described the scene in the inn-yard I felt my brother’s eyes had been

fixed upon me. Now I heard him rise, and felt his hand laid upon my shoulder.

‘Poor lad,’ said he very gently, ‘poor lad! what fearful suffering, what a terrible war must have been in your good heart! Why did I not know it and help you to victory? You have won alone. I know it now, but God forgive me, with what carnage of your soul, which but for my folly I could have stayed. We have both sinned, and grievously we have both been punished; let us now lay down the scourge.’

I looked up, hardly daring to face him. Yet when I saw his look was filled with pity I took courage. Rising to my feet I took his hands and pressed them hard, but I could not speak. So putting his arm through mine, he led me to the door.

‘Come,’ said he, ‘we will go talk together. While our captain finishes writing his instructions we will try to instruct each other how best to show ourselves worthy of her.’

I think we both went out very humbled. Not only because Frank had so imperiously bent us to his will and shown us what children we were beside him, but also because he had compared us to the love-sick boys of the crew, and our story to their love squabbles. Yet how could we deny it was different? It was indeed hard to confess how little different it was, and, as I say, we both went out with our pride, the mainstay of quarrels, much humbled.

We had both, I know, tried honestly that our quarrel should end here, yet was the rent too wide and deep to

be mended so easily. His arm seemed to sit uneasily in mine, and ere we had gone a few paces he took some excuse of a point coming untied to draw it away.

Like strangers at last we sat down and tried to talk, but it was very difficult. I would have given my tongue to have gone on with the tale where Frank ended, and to have told Harry how I had seen his dear wife mourning over her child for his loss. Yet half from shame to confess I had gone back to Ashtead, and half in fear of adding to his grief by telling him what abiding love he had left, I held my peace, and we fell to talking in false notes about the voyage, till, to our great relief, Harry was summoned to Frank's cabin to receive his orders for Captain John Drake. As soon as I was alone Sergeant Culverin came up to me with his elaborate salute.

'I trust you will forgive my freedom, your worship,' said he.

'Forgive, Sergeant!' I answered. 'I have nothing to forgive; I have only thanks for the good work you have done.'

'Nay,' said he, 'I did nothing; no more than that astrolabe with which Mr. Oxenham yonder is taking our position. I was but a poor instrument for Captain Drake to shape your courses withal.'

'Still I must thank you, Sergeant, from my heart.'

'I pray you, sir, if you love me, say no more. Let us pass to other things. How does this most uncivil motion sort with your worship's stomach?'

‘Well enough, Sergeant; does it quarrel with yours?’ I asked, for he looked a little pale.

‘To be plain with you, sir, the sea and I are not so good friends as we hope to become. Last night was most evil to me in yonder fly-boat—*Swan*, they call it; yet for liveliness *Sparrow* would sort better with its nature. There was, moreover, a mariner of the watch who would increase my load by singing continually a most woeful, ancient ballad of pilgrims at sea. Thus it ran, sir :—

“Thus meanwhile the pilgrims lie,
And have their bowlies fast them by,
And cry after hot Malvoisie,
Their health for to restore.
And some would have a salted toast,
For they might eat nor sodden nor roast;
A nan might soon pay for their cost
As for one day or twain.”

And more very sickly stuff to like intent, sir, to a very doleful tune.’

‘I fear, Sergeant,’ said I, ‘your voyage to the Indies will not be as pleasant as you could desire.’

‘Indeed, sir,’ said he, ‘I wish we could fetch thither a-horseback, being, as I think, the only honourable manner of going for gentlemen. Still, since it has pleased God to put this shift, rude, uncourtly sea betwixt us and the Indies, we must e’en make shift with a ship.’

‘I am sorry for you, Sergeant,’ I answered. ‘A horse indeed would have been a conveyance you better understood.’

'Well, it is not so much that,' said the Sergeant. 'For when I was sergeant-groom under the Signor John Peter Pugliano, esquire of the Emperor's stables, the word always went that a man who could manage a horse could manage anything, save it were a woman, by your worship's leave. So I think a ship will not come amiss to me, being in relation to a horse but a wet lifeless thing.'

'But yet, Sergeant,' said I, 'of a wholly different nature.'

'I know not that, sir,' said he. 'The ancients were wiser than we in these matters, saving your worship's learning, and, as I have been told, placed amongst their ensigns military the horse, as being sacred to the god Neptune as well as to Mars, and the symbol of immoderate fury of attack on sea as well as on land. Moreover in your tilting of one ship against another you have an image or imitation of the crowning glory of horsemanship.'

'But we English do not use this method,' I answered, 'and hold it only fit for Turks and Spaniards, and such like, who, having no skill in sailing and seamanship, are compelled to use galleys propelled with oars.'

'Mass!' said Culverin, 'had I known that I should have sailed even less willingly than I did. What you say may be right, yet I hold that to sail with a lance at your bows is the more honourable and soldierly method. But let that pass. Doubtless by further contemplation I shall discover further similitudes between the horse and the ship. Since I hear what

you say, sir, I see nothing in which they are alike save in respect of their prancing—a quality I would gladly forego in the present case, seeing that I am like to find little comfort in it.’

As we spoke Harry came out of the captain’s cabin, and Sergeant Culverin had to leave to accompany his master back to the *Swan*. My brother, good heart, did his best to bid me farewell as of old, but what between my shamefacedness to see his careworn look and damped spirit, and his own too recent sense of the great wrong I had done him, our leave-taking was cold and formal, for all he tried so hard to forgive.

CHAPTER XVII

OUR wind held so fair and steady at north-east that on the ninth day we sighted Porto Santo in the Madeiras, and two days later the Canaries. So persuaded was our captain of a very good passage, and so earnest to give the Spaniards no inkling of our purpose, that he would not touch for water, but held on without once dropping anchor or striking sail till the thirty-fifth day.

In spite of the terrible shock my sudden meeting with Harry had given to my spirits, and in spite of my despair at being condemned to face my shame and sorrow for I knew not how many months, I could not but feel a calm grow over me as we proceeded. None can tell, save he who has tried it, what it is to a perturbed spirit to sail on day after day over those sunny seas with all the magic of the West before. Less and less I brooded over the old life, and more and more on the glory of the new, till, as Frank had said, the past seemed to grow small, and a faint hope arose in me that my crime was not too great for pardon, seeing that I knew how hard my brother would try to forgive.

I employed myself in studying navigation and the

Spanish tongue with Frank, nor were ship duties wanting, for it was ever our captain's way to have the gentlemen tally on a rope as well as the meanest mariner when need was.

He hated nothing so much as idleness, and those who had no work had always to find play, which he himself was not slow in furnishing.

'I know nothing,' he used to say, 'that breeds discontent and faint hearts like the union of these two, dullness and idleness.'

So with games, and music, and rummaging and cleaning arms, our spirits were kept up when they were like to sink for want of work. Frank was very earnest about this on our present voyage, for as we neared the Indies the hands, being young, began to frighten themselves with tales of the great strength and richness of the Indian cities, until, had it not been for Frank's care in stopping and preventing such idle talk with other inducements, they would have come to think *Nombre de Dios* as big as London and as strong as Berwick.

Nor were we allowed to lose sight of the godly purpose of our enterprise. Prayers were ordered every day night and morning, which our captain read very earnestly, never forgetting a prayer to God for the Queen's Majesty, her most honourable council, and the speedy 'making' of our voyage, the same having a very good effect, for the half at least of the crew were as good Puritans as himself.

Thus it was in a very hopeful and godly state that,

on the evening of the thirty-fifth day we saw the Isle of Guadeloupe towering on the horizon like a priceless jewel in the setting sun. With all our music and many a gay flourish of our trumpets we saluted it, and that night as we lay a-hull our musicians gave us a double portion of melody.

With the first morning light we ran in and anchored off a little rocky island three leagues off Dominica, where we lay three days to refresh our men. And here we landed and wandered at will, to taste for the first time the surpassing loveliness of the tropics.

How shall I tell of those first days in the Indies? My pen seems a dumb dead thing when I think of it. Much as I had thought, and dreamed, and read of them, this waking, this seeing was far beyond all. On either hand the heights of Guadeloupe and Dominica towered serenely out of their soft beds of lustrous green. The glittering waters between were studded with island gems ablaze with every bright hue which God has made, that we may taste the glory which is to come. All about us was the hum of bright flies, the sparkle of feather and gorgeous flowers, and the rustle of the scented air through the crowded canes as it passed on to wave with dreamy motion the heavy crowns of the slender palms. And over all, with faint and soothing voice, there came in through the dense growth of vine and brake the deep-toned booming of the surf.

Such is the pale shadow that I have power to paint of the banquet on which our souls feasted as we lay in the deserted huts which the Indians, who came there

to fish, had built. So rich and heavenly was that world that I could not wonder how men were led on to think that a little farther, only a little farther, must be a land where gold and gems would be as the sand and pebbles here, nay, where beyond some glittering hill they would see the open gates of Paradise.

Not only by the memory of all that beauty does the time live in my mind, but also because it was here I first had real speech with my wronged brother. As we lay in those Dryad's bowers our sorrow seemed so far away and little in this New World, so dim beside its dazzling glory, that it was for a time half forgotten amidst the thousand new things that crowded our thoughts. Like two Sileni we lay, as Mr. Oxenham had said, in the arms of lady Nature, and all that was sad melted in the glow of her luxuriant life.

We had no spirit for the revels of our comrades, for chasing the bright-hued birds, or plucking the gleaming flowers. We were both happier to lie looking over the sea where our dainty ships rocked, and dreamily talk over Harry's Italianate notions that rose unbidden here. Being to me now of undreamed-of interest, since my old faith was gone, they were a subject we could talk on more as we used to do.

'Surely,' I remember him saying, 'surely that Italian friar was right who told me that the soul was not in the body. Can you not feel here, Jasper, how great a thing it is? Can you not feel how there is something that binds you like a brother to all this music of bird and leaf and air and sea? What can it

be but the great soul of the universe. That is it, and the friar was right. It is that great soul which is not in our bodies, rather are our bodies in the soul—the soul that is yours and mine and hers and God's.'

So would our speech always come back to our sorrow and part us again. Yet were we too drunken with the western wine to feel the past too deeply. Thus, then, once or twice during our stay there we had speech of these things, and I began to hope still more that some day we might be the same again together, and, moreover, to feel that I was beginning to understand what it was he thought of the great universal secret.

On the third day after our coming to the island we sailed again, greatly refreshed, and in two days more we had sight of Tierra-Firme, being the high land above Santa Marta, but came not near the shore, that we might not be seen. So without sight of Carthagena we passed on, till on the 12th of July we dropped anchor off the haven whither we were bound.

It was a spot our captain had noted on his vogue the last year, not only as being sheltered by two high points from the winds and a very commodious harbour, but also because no Spaniard had any dwelling between this place and Santiago de Tolu on the one hand and Nombre de Dios on the other, the nearest being at least thirty-five leagues distant. Moreover, there was an abundance of food there, both fish in the sea and fowls in the woods around, the most plentiful being certain birds like to our pheasants, which the Spaniards in those regions call guans and curassows. It was by

reason of the great store of these delicate fowls that our captain named the place Port Pheasant.

It must be remembered we had our three pinnaces to set up, for in them we were to make our attack. It was most necessary then to have a hidden place for this work, and it was not a little his knowledge of this secret haven that gave our captain his great hopes of success. He judged no one knew it but himself and those who had been with him in his previous voyage. Being thus perfectly secure, Frank rowed in to see how best to bring the ships to moorings there, and I went in the boat.

No place could have been better fitted to our purpose. The headlands were but half a cable's length apart, and so overhung with a dense growth of brakes and trees, all strange to me, that little could be seen beyond save the climbing hills on the mainland. But as soon as we rowed in I could see what a paradise it was.

Before us opened a rounded haven, from eight to ten cables' length every way. The waves died languidly away towards the shore in ever-lessening ripples, as though hushed by the surpassing beauty of the place. Where, with loving whispers, they lapped the golden beach, they reflected a picture more dazzling than my eyes had ever seen. Heaped up in wild profusion was a tangled mass of every hue of green that clothed to the water's edge the gently swelling hills. Wherever the rocks could find a place to peep, their own rich colour was almost hidden by hanging bunches of scarlet flowers. Huge rough tree-trunks I could get a glimpse of here

and there, with great sinews of rugged bark that stood boldly out from them, and were lost in the glowing brakes which covered the ground. In the branches fluttered birds that mocked the radiance of the flowers, while on every point the crested and bronze-hued pheasants plumed themselves, and screamed defiance one against the other. Lost to all else but this fairy-land, I was hardly plunged, as it were, into some delicious dream, when I was rudely awakened.

‘Vast rowing, lads,’ said Frank suddenly, in quick, hushed tones. ‘Look! What’s yonder?’

His keen eye was the first to see it. I looked where he pointed, and in a moment my paradise was tumbled to earth. Away in the trees rose a thin blue cloud of smoke. There was no mistaking it; the hand of man must be there. ‘Whose was it?’ was what we each asked ourselves with melancholy foreboding.

Our captain, though as disappointed as any of us to see a cuckoo in his nest, seemed nothing daunted. Rowing back quickly to the ships, he ordered out our other boat, and manning both to their full holding, not forgetting muskets, bows, and pikes, returned speedily to land.

No sooner were we ashore than we could see many traces of men having been there very lately. There were black spots where fires had been, and marks of fresh clearing in the brakes. Setting ourselves in order, we cautiously went forward along a track that seemed to lead to the fire, Frank leading the way in spite of all our efforts to dissuade him.

We had not gone far before we came to a tree in the midst of the track, so great that four men at full stretch could not have girdled it about. I saw Frank stop suddenly and look up on the trunk.

‘Ah, Jack Garrett, Jack Garrett,’ said he, ‘what game is this you have been coursing with my hounds?’

I followed his eyes and saw a leaden plate nailed to the tree, on which were graven these words :

CAPTAIN DRAKE.

If you fortune to come to this port, make hast away ! For the Spaniards which you had with you here the last year have bewrayed this place, and taken away all that you left here.

I depart from hence, this present 7th of July 1572.

Your very loving friend,

JOHN GARRETT.

‘My thanks, Jack Garrett, for your kindly warning,’ cried Frank. ‘A true Plymouth man are you, though you did whistle away some of my best hounds. See what comes,’ he continued, turning to me, ‘of sparing these false Spaniards’ lives. It is enough to make a man cut the throat of every prisoner he takes—a thing, by God’s help, I will never do, whatever it cost me. May they have their reward for their treachery, though, by God’s mercy, we are too well furnished to be hurt by the loss of any gear they stole.’

‘Where will you go now, then?’ I asked.

‘No whither, my lad,’ said he. ‘Here I purposed to set up my pinnaces, and here I will do it. The Spaniards are not here now, and if they keep away but

two days, I shall order things so that, by God's help, they shall rue their coming, if that is their mind.'

He was very cheerful and resolute with it all, and made us so too, yet I know he was sorely tried, by his frequent speaking of God's name, which was always his way at times when he felt need of all his courage, as indeed he did now; for though we found the place deserted, the fire we had seen being but the remains of Garrett's work, left perhaps as a signal to us to be on our guard, yet there was no telling when the Spaniards would be down on us.

No time, therefore, was lost in carrying out our captain's resolve. Harry having, as I have said, a good knowledge of such matters, speedily marked out a piece of land about three-quarters of an acre in extent, of pentagonal form, with one side touching the shore. The whole crew then started cheerily to clear this, hauling the trees as they were felled with pulleys and hawsers, in such wise as to make a rampart all round, a look-out boat being despatched meanwhile to one of the points to watch for any disturbance.

All that day we laboured at our fort, and most of the night too; yet next morning much still remained to be done when we saw our look-out boat rowing hard towards us.

'Sail ho!' shouted the steersman, as soon as he was in hail. 'Three sail bearing hard down on us.'

'Blister the fool's tongue!' said Frank beneath his breath, as he stood at my side and saw something like alarm in the younger mariners' faces, but he sang out

cheerily, 'Good news, good news, my lads. Now we will trap them here, and never a breath of our coming shall reach Nombre de Dios.'

The man reported the three sail, as well as he could tell; a bark about the *Swan's* size, a caravel, and a smaller craft. All set to work cheerily to carry out Frank's order; for we were in excellent heart again, to see that our captain thought only of offence.

Some pieces of ordnance were removed from the ships, to be set by Harry and Mr. Oxenham in the best positions they could find for the defence of our fort. The ships were then warped over to the entrance of the haven, where they were moored on either hand close under the rocks, so that they could not be seen by a ship till she was well within. Each had a holdfast to the opposite point, that they might be warped across the mouth as soon as the enemy had passed in. All fires were extinguished, and the small-shot, gunners, and bowmen who were ashore at the fort were well concealed.

So we lay waiting in great anxiety for what was to come. Mr. Oxenham and Harry, by pouring out a fire of jests and comfortable speeches, kept up the youngsters' spirits as well as might be, though I think by their looks there was many a heart thumping hard, when we saw through the bushes a large Spanish shallop rowing in towards our haven.

As the shallop came on a bark of some fifty tons and a caravel of Seville build, as Mr. Oxenham told us, hove to right opposite our entrance. The shallop came

as far as between the points, and then, after stopping as though to discover the place thoroughly, rowed back to the ships.

It was impossible to tell whether they had seen us or not; so, seeing what our aim was, we could but rejoice when we saw them all make sail and stand in. On they came, a pretty sight to see, swaggering in most gallantly.

At last they were well inside, in full view of our ships, which yet did not move an inch.

'Something must be wrong,' whispered Mr. Oxenham to me. 'Why the devil does he not warp across, or at least give them a shot?'

Suddenly there was a loud flourish of trumpets on board the admiral and the flag of St. George was run up, but still she did not stir.

'Her holdfasts must have dragged,' said Mr. Oxenham; 'I fear we are undone.'

A puff of smoke leaped forth from the strange bark, and we looked to see the admiral struck. The boom of the shot rolled across the still waters, waking strange echoes in that land-locked bay, and setting the guans a-screaming their ear-piercing cry. Ere the sounds died away a trumpet brayed answer to our admiral, and we saw the red cross flutter out from the stranger's top.

At first we thought it must be some treacherous Spanish stratagem, but all our fears were at rest when, as our ships answered, the stranger's salute, we saw a boat put out from the bark and go abroad the admiral.

Our fears and pains were all wasted ; for she proved to be a bark from the Isle of Wight, belonging to Sir Edward Horsey, the Governor, 'Wild Ned Horsey,' so well known to us, not only for the mad stories of his ruffling youth and his piracies in the narrow seas during the old days, but also for the excellent disposition he made for the defence of the island, and above all for his notable services when he rode at the head of Clinton's horse during the late rising in the North.

He was a great gentleman now and high in the Queen's service, yet he could not wholly give up his old ways, and had fitted out this present ship, under Captain Ranse, to try what Popish prizes he could pick up on the high seas or amongst the Indies. He had 'made' his voyage so far as to take a shallop off Cape Blanco, and, what was better, a caravel carrying *Advisos* to Nombre de Dios.

He was thus able, when he heard our purpose, to confirm us from the papers he had seized that as yet the Spaniards had no knowledge of our coming. So very welcome and favourable for our purpose did this seem that Captain Ranse was desirous to consort with us in our venture.

Nothing could have been more to the minds of most of us than this, seeing he had thirty good and well-armed men with him, but Frank was little pleased with it, and would gladly have gone forward alone, save that he thought it better to put a good face on a bad matter and consent, seeing how Captain Ranse, if he were evilly disposed, might bring all our voyage to naught.

So they were received upon conditions which I, being a scholar, was appointed to draw, whereof having a copy I will set it forth, that men in like case hereafter may see how the Prince of Navigators ordered these things, since unhappy quarrels have many times arisen between captains who have sailed in consort, by reason of their not doing things orderly at the outset, after the ancient usages of the sea.

As I sat in our council chamber, which had for its walls the rugged buttresses of one of those huge trees of which I have spoken, and for roof the vast spread of its branches, alive with screaming parrots, I could not but muse on dull-eyed lawyers far away in their dingy Temple ; nor, as I wrote the dry note which contrasted so strangely with the splendour of our audacious project, could I but marvel over the might of our great Queen's peace, which in such humble shape could reach even here to aid her loving subjects in ordering the chivalrous brotherhood by which we hoped to add such glory to her name. And thus I wrote the words as Frank spoke them, plain and clear, that none might have to hunt for sense in a forest of sounds.

'I, Francis Drake, general of the fleet appointed for these seas, to wit, the *Paska*, of seventy tons and forty-seven men, and the *Swan*, of twenty-five tons and twenty-six men, together with three pinnaces unmann'd, have consorted, covenanted, and agreed, and by these presents do consort, covenant, and agree, with James Ranse, of the *Lion*, fifty tons and thirty men, belonging to and being under the flag of the Honourable Sir

Edward Horsey, Knight, together with a certain caravel to be hereafter measured, and a shallop, her prizes and consorts, to have, possess, enjoy, and be partaker with me and my fleet, and I with them, of all such lawful prize or prizes as shall be taken by me or them, or any of us jointly or severally, in sight or out of sight, ton for ton, and man for man, from this present 13th day of July 1572, till such time as we mutually determine the conditions contained herein.'

So it was signed, sealed, and delivered, and all being settled we laboured together harmoniously—the carpenters at setting up the pinnaces, and the rest by spells at completing the fort, exercising in our weapons, the gathering of victuals, and many pastimes which our captain devised.

CHAPTER XVIII

JUST sixteen days after my ink was dry the great bell in the church of Nombre de Dios was calling men to complines as the sun went down. So it might have boomed over the waving forest and darkening sea any time the last fifty years or more. Yet I doubt if the people would have doffed their broad hats, or crossed themselves so peacefully to-night, had they known in what other ears it sounded besides their own.

I doubt their prayers would have been more fervent that night had they been aware how the stars, that just began to glimmer, were looking down on four boats crowded with men, that were striking a-hull and dropping their grapples hard by the mouth of the Rio Francisco, scarce two leagues from the point of their bay.

Yet there we lay in our three pinnaces and the shallop, seventy-three desperate souls, on the eve of our great attempt.

The ships and the rest of the men had been left behind, under Captain Ranse, at the Isle of Pinos, twenty-five leagues away, and we had come on, each man with the comrades he chose, as far as could be. I

was with Frank, Harry with Mr. Oxenham, the other pinnace being in charge of John Drake, and the shallop under John Overy, the master of the *Lion*. Everything had been done to encourage the more faint-hearted, and we were most excellently furnished with muskets, calivers, pikes, fire-pikes, targets, bows, and everything such an enterprise could need, apportioned to each man according to his skill and disposition.

Yet many a heart must have beat anxiously as we lay waiting for the dark night, and would have done so still more had the mariners been aware of all that their commanders knew. For at the Isles of Pinos we had captured two small frigates from Nombre de Dios, wherein certain negroes were lading planks. From these men, being very kindly used, we heard that their countrymen, the Cimaroons, had fallen upon the town and nearly surprised it but six weeks ago.

These Cimaroons were African negroes who, having risen against their masters some eighty years ago, had fled into the woods, and now were become two nations, that lived in the country on either side of the way from Panama to Nombre de Dios, each under its separate king. For defence against these people our prisoners told us soldiers were expected from Panama and elsewhere, if they were not already come.

Nothing could have been worse for us; for now we knew that the town would be on the alert, and perhaps full of soldiers. Yet, wishing to make the best of a bad case, our captain freed these slaves and set them ashore, that they might seek their countrymen and bear them

a good report of us, in case it might fall out that at a future time the help of the Spaniards' enemies might be welcome to us.

We who knew these things kept them to ourselves, very thankful for our increased force. Frank, I know, saw how ill this fortune was for us, yet he was more cheerful and resolute than I had ever seen him when he called the boats about him, that he might say his last words to the crews.

'Come close,' said he, 'that I have not to speak too loud, and so be heard by any negroes in the woods, whereby those in the town might have notice of our coming, which I should much grieve at. For I am loath to put them to all the charge which I know they would willingly bestow for our entertainment, seeing that we come uninvited.'

Putting them thus in cheerful heart, he went on to tell them of the vast wealth of the place, which was all open to them, seeing it was unwallled and little defended. Then he spoke again of all his wrongs, both at Rio de la Hacha and San Juan de Ulloa, and of the bitter cruelties of the Spaniards to English mariners whom they caught in Spain; and told them how he was now in certain hope of God's favour to win a recompense for all these things, since it had been vouchsafed to him to get so near his end utterly undiscovered and with so excellent a crew of men like-minded to himself.

This cheerful speech much comforted us all, and I saw Harry and the Sergeant lie back and go to sleep, being old hands at the work. But I could not close my

eyes any more than the greater part of the men, who soon fell to talking of how strong such a place must be, till Frank, seeing how things were going, called on Mr. Oxenham, who was in the next boat to us, to tell the story of the founding of Nombre de Dios, to keep the men from thinking too much.

‘ Well, my lads,’ said he, sitting up on a barrel, ‘ it was the early days of the Indies then, when Don Nicuese was named at Carthagena governor, grand-admiral, captain-general, and I know not what *braggadocio* titles beside, of his new province of Veragua. With 750 men and a fine fleet he set sail, bragging, I doubt not, to his Maestro del Campo, or whatever he was, Lope de Olano, of all that was to come of it ; yet ere he was half-way they say his whole force were like to mutiny, because of his cruelty and harshness. To punish his wickedness and tyranny, a *furicano* burst on him in the midst of his journey. The proud fleet was scattered past recall, and the haughty governor cast away. What miseries of hunger and cold and weariness he suffered none know, but at last he was found by Lope de Olano half-starved, having no food but palm-tree buds and such like wretched stuff, instead of all the dainties he had brought to fill his belly. The only thing that was not changed in him was his cruelty and harshness, for never in all their sufferings would he bend a jot to his men.

‘ All that was thus left of his navy came at last to a port which Columbus had once discovered. A mariner who had sailed with the “ Old Admiral ” said it was a fair place for a settlement, and conducted him thither,

getting curt thanks for his pains, you may be sure. The old mariner was right ; but he had forgotten the Indians, who so overdid their welcome that Nicuese made haste to depart thence, leaving twenty of his men behind.

‘Baffled and sullen, he sailed on to the next port, where he profanely cried, “In the name of God, let us stay here!” and hence yonder town, that is to be ours to-morrow, was called “Nombre de Dios.” Then, having but a hundred men left out of his seven hundred and fifty, he laid the foundation of his city ; and here, for a while, living miserably, without fit food or clothing, in wooden huts, he resisted the constant assaults of the Indians, till thirty more of his men were lost.

‘They dared not stir beyond their camp for food, fever was slowly eating out their hearts, and they were at the mercy of God, when one Calmenaras, putting in to the bay, found them. They were then of all men, it is said, the most miserable, being, as it were, dried up with extreme hunger, filthy beyond all speaking, and horrible to behold.

‘Yet through all Nicuese clung to his cruelty and harshness and the King of Spain’s commission. Calmenaras took pity on him, and carried him to the new settlement at Darien, which as yet had no governor, that he might be set over the people there. But when they came thither the settlers remembered his tyranny and wickedness, and saw by his demeanour that, though all else was dried up in him, yet the devil was not. So they, being resolved to be rid of him, took an old rotten

brigantine, which they caulked with iron, and set their would-be governor therein, with his seventy men, starved and fever-bitten.

‘In this, as their only hope of life, and being too sore sick to resist, they sailed; and the sea alone, that tells no tales, knows what their end was. Never more was a man of them heard or seen, and Nicuese was called ever after *Desdichado*.’

‘*Desdichado!*’ cried Frank, as Mr. Oxenham ended his tale; ‘and a right name, too; for surely the Lord made him luckless and suffered no angel to prosper him in his ways, because of his wickedness and cruelty, and turned away His face from yonder town which he founded, because He knew the wickedness that would be done there, and the sinews of wickedness that would come thence. Yes, lads, the Lord has deserted Nombre de Dios, and to-morrow, of His justice and mercy, will deliver it into the hands of His people.’

Then one struck up that new Protestant ballad they loved so well:

‘We will not change our credo
For Pope, nor book, nor bell;
And if the devil come himself,
We’ll hound him back to hell.’

By this time it was dark night, and we gladly took to our oars again, rowing hard under the shore, that we might not be seen of the watch-house. So we continued till we recovered the point of the harbour, and there we lay to again, to wait for the first gray of dawn, when our captain purposed to deliver his assault.

It was still full two hours to wait, and I could see how anxious Frank was as to how his men would get through them. For if it had been hard to keep them from their talk before, it was doubly so now, when no one might speak above his breath. Wearily an hour dragged away, and the men were growing more and more uneasy, shifting about and whispering a great deal as they watched nervously for the first glimmer in the east.

‘Would God it were day!’ whispered Frank to me. ‘How shall we ever pass another hour of this? The poor lads’ courage is oozing out at their finger-ends with all this lingering.’

‘See, see!’ said I; for even as he spoke a faint gray streak appeared on the horizon. ‘There it is at last!’

‘Never a bit, lad,’ answered Frank; ‘it is only the moon rising. Still, it shall serve for dawn to-day. No one has seen the sand-glass but I.’

There was a merry twinkle in his eye as he passed the word. ‘Dawn, dawn,’ he said, in low tones. ‘Out oars, lads; yarely now, and still as mice, and God help our service.’

How pleasant was the dull rattle of oars after our painful silence as we rowed round the point! All was gloom as we bore towards the town, save for a few lights that twinkled here and there, and one that moved slowly across the bay. As we came abreast of this we could see in the growing moonlight that it was on board of a ship of some sixty tons, which had just arrived. Her crew seemed soon to catch sight of us and to take

alarm at our numbers ; for we saw them cast off their gondola, which shot away immediately hard for the shore, like the ghost of some evil monster.

‘Not so fast, not so fast, my gallants!’ cried Frank. ‘Be not at such pains on our behalf. Come, my lads, we must save them this trouble, and carry the news ourselves. Now, smite for all that is in you!’

The pinnacle leaped under their sturdy strokes, and we headed to cut off the gliding shadow from the shore. It was a sharp struggle, for the Dons rowed well and their boat was light. Still, our sinews soon told. Seeing they were beaten, they stopped irresolute, and then, with some blaspheming cry, made over to the opposite side of the bay.

‘What, so rude?’ laughed Frank. ‘Will you not stay to fling us one little word of thanks for the labour we save you? Well, better manners to you, and a fair good-morrow. And now, lads, hard for the town!’

We could soon see it in the gloomy light, sunk snug amongst the soft, forest-clad hills. I had hardly looked to see it so big ; for, by the few scattered lights that twinkled far apart, I judged it was at least as large as Plymouth. As we drew near, a sandy beach showed dimly before us, sloping down from the nearest houses, which were scarce twenty yards from the water. There was no quay, nor any thing but a half-ruined platform, on which stood six great pieces gaping at us. Not a sign of life was to be seen, so without more ado we ran our pinnaces aground and leaped out into the water undiscovered.

‘Down with the culverins, my lads,’ cried Frank, as quietly as might be. With that a rush was made at the platform, but even as we reached it up jumped a gunner, who must have been sleeping against one of the pieces, and ran off screaming into the town before we could stay him.

We could hear his cries die away amongst the houses, and then for a few minutes all was again as silent as death. Still, we knew all secrecy was over now, and we went to our work with a will. Culverin and demi-culverin were tumbled off their carriages and rolled into the sand, and then to our captain’s sharp orders we set about our other dispositions.

There was a good deal to be done, getting the arms from the pinnaces, lighting our fire-pikes and matches, and getting into our companies. All had been well ordered beforehand, yet, quick as we were, before we had done we heard the troubled waking of the town.

First came a low confused sound, rather felt than heard, and then scattered cries, with the brave blare of a trumpet. As the cries spread in the murmur, now on this side, now on that, a light flashed in the church tower, and the great bell began booming out a hurried alarm. Now it seemed that drums furiously beaten were running up and down. Farther and wider spread the cries, and louder rose the murmur. A scream of some terrified woman went shrilly up, then another, and another, and the murmur began to increase to the dull, mingled roar of a multitude suddenly alarmed. Far and near the clamour waxed. Shriek on shriek,

and cry on cry followed incessant, till at last the whole town was filled with that strange and terrible sound which is like nothing else on earth; and above all boomed the bell.

We were ready at last; so, leaving twelve to keep the pinnacles, we hastened, as had been arranged, to the mount on the east side of the town, which our captain had learned the year before it was their intention to strengthen with sundry pieces of ordnance. This it was necessary to our purpose that we should first hold with a party of our men, so, leaving half our company, of whom I was one, to guard the foot, Frank hastened up the hill with the rest.

He seemed a long time gone, as we stood inactive, listening to that terrible tumult, of which we could see nothing, growing ever louder and ever wider amidst the crowded houses, and the great bell booming continually over all. Not a sound came from the mount above us, and we could tell nothing of what was happening to our comrades.

At last we heard the clink of weapons coming down, and our captain ran to us with all his men bearing the joyful news that no ordnance had yet been mounted there, though all was prepared for it.

‘This is a most merciful dealing of God,’ said Frank, ‘for now, look you, we shall have all our men for the Plaza. Plague on them, how they squall! We will give them somewhat to squall over anon. Jack, take you Mr. Oxenham and fifteen of his company round by the King’s Treasure-House, by the way you know, and

enter the Plaza by the eastern end. I will go up with the main battle by the broad street. Give them plenty of music of drum and trumpet, and I will do the like, that they may see they are attacked from two sides, and increase our numbers for us with their fears.'

Away went John Drake and Mr. Oxenham with their fifteen men, a drum, trumpet, and five of the blazing fire-pikes. We saw them disappear, yelling horribly, with much grizzly noise of their instruments, to the no little discomfort, I doubt, of those who still slept.

In like manner we took our course by the lurid glare of our fire-pikes, with an equal or greater din of trumpet, drum, and arms, being forty-four men in all. The Plaza lay towards the upper part of the town, so that on coming to the top of the street, which, being very sandy, made us short of breath with our running, our captain called a halt.

Creeping on under shelter of the houses, I got a sight within the square. In the midst was a goodly tree, and near to it a market-cross. Farther again to the right was the church, from which the great bell boomed continually. From the cross to the church I could see the glimmer of a long row of matches, by whose movement I judged there was a company of harquebusiers gathered there waiting for us, but I could see nothing of them because of the gloom that filled the place.

In the farther corner to the left, where, they told me, the road to Panama left the square, rose a house much larger than the rest. Here by the light of sun-

dry lanterns I could see a great throng collected, with several companies of soldiers. I should think there were a hundred matches or more burning there ; wherefore, having made a complete discovery of the Plaza, I crept back to inform our captain.

‘Hark ye, my lads,’ cried Frank, when he had heard my report. ‘At the word we will advance into the square. Mr. Overy’s crew with the gentlemen to the right, the rest with me to the left. Stand but for one volley, and then close ! Forward now, in God’s name !’

A roar of small shot greeted us as we sallied into the square, and the bullets tore up the sand amidst our feet. I saw our trumpeter fall forward in the midst of a merry blast, and heard Frank utter a sharp cry. But there was no time to see what was happening. Already our arrows and bullets were making the Spaniards sing in the left-hand corner of the square. I discharged my pistol with the rest and then sprang forward by Harry’s side, rapier and dagger in hand.

Straight at the line of matches we dashed. Every moment I looked to see them belch their fire and hear a storm of hail about my ears. Ten more strides and we should be amongst them.

‘Plague on the fools !’ cried Harry, who was leading.

‘What mountebank dispositions are these ?’ cried the Sergeant at his side.

Not a man was there. It was but a string of matches hung from the church to the cross to terrify us, as if we had been Cimaroons.

‘Back, back,’ cried Harry, ‘back to aid the general.’

With an angry roar at being so befooled we ran back under the broad branches of the tree in the middle of the Plaza, and so leaped out to help our comrades. Even as we did so I heard a volley at the end of the square before me and saw John Drake and Mr. Oxenham, with all their party, rush out into the Plaza and with a loud cry hurl themselves at the throng.

Now we were all at hard push of pike crowding the amazed throng into the corner of the square. Yet we had work to do, for the Spanish soldiers held their ground well, in spite of the press. For a time the thing seemed to hang in a balance. I remember little but a wild turmoil, wherein I was at point and cut half mad with excitement, and all around were the butt ends of muskets whirling, and pikes and bills clattering, as they were thrust and parried.

My ears were full of the din of the fight, the shouts and clang of weapons, and the screams of women flying out on the Panama road; and still, above all, the great bell boomed unceasing.

Now they were giving way. Our twelve fire-pikes, being well armed with long steel heads, were doing their work above all the rest. None dared stand before the flaming weapons. Step by step they gave us ground, till suddenly the press broke up, and, flinging down their arms, they fell to running out of the Panama gate as hard as they could skelter.

Away we went after them, driving them before us like a flock of sheep. Continually they cast away their weapons, which at last lay so thick that many of our

men were hurt by them, not being able to avoid them in the darkness. So we left them to scamper out by their grand new gate, which they had set up to prevent the Cimaroons entering, little thinking the first use they should find for it would be to run out of to save their skins.

Being thus in possession of the Plaza our captain made haste to set guards at the entrance of it, and sent a party to stay the bell, which still boomed on through it all; for we knew not how many soldiers might still be in the remoter parts of the town, to muster at its noisy summons. Then he called on a prisoner whom we had taken to lead a party of us to the governor's house.

'What do you think of our venture now?' said Frank to me, his face beaming with triumph. 'Now you shall see where all the mules from Panama are unladen, and what they bring.'

'That is well enough,' answered I; 'but will you not first look to your hurt?'

'Hush, lad,' said he; 'it is nothing—a fly-bite.'

'Nay, but your boot is bloody where the shot tore it,' I said.

'I tell you it is nothing,' answered he testily. 'Hold your peace or we are undone.'

I said no more, marvelling at the constancy of this man, who seemed to think nothing of a hurt, which, as far as I could see, was enough to have laid any other man on his back long ago.

By this time we were conducted to a great archway in the tall house of which I have spoken, beneath

which was tied a splendid jennet, ready saddled, as though for the governor's use. On one side were steps leading upwards, where candles burned and shed a bright light into a large cellar on the opposite side. I could see it was a chamber of great length, partly by aid of the candles and partly by the moonlight that glimmered in. Along the whole length of one side, from floor to ceiling was a pale cold glimmer, which looked very strange to me. Several of our men were staring at it with wide eyes and mouths.

'What is it?' said I.

'What is it,' replied Frank; 'why, silver!'

I could hardly believe it, yet so it was, a pile of silver bars, as I should judge, ten feet in breadth, twelve in height, and seventy in length. I was altogether amazed to see my dreams of the Indies more than realised, and hardly knew if I were waking or not, till I heard Frank, who had been questioning our prisoner at length, cry out to us :

'Not a bar will I have touched,' said he. 'I brought you not here for that rubbish. In the King's Treasure-House there is better stuff—gold, lads, gold and pearls enough to fill all our pinnaces and more. So thither must we go, and not a bar of this shall be touched.'

I think there were many who would have been well satisfied with the silver, and hardly came to obey Frank's orders, but he was so resolute in them that there was nothing for it but to do as he said and return to our strength, which was posted about the great tree under command of John Drake.

As we neared them one came running out to say they could not break into the church or stop the ringing unless they fired the building, which they craved leave to do.

‘Nay, that you shall not,’ said Frank; ‘by yea and nay have I sworn never to injure church or woman, whatever come. Let him ring till he bring a thousand devils about us, I care not; but fire the house of God I will not, howsoever it be defiled with idolatry and superstition.’

So the bell boomed on as loud as ever, being very distressful to hear so long, and giving me at least a strange feeling of evil at hand, which I would gladly have shaken off.

When we came to our strength many of the men, who seemed to have been scattered about the Plaza, came running up to the tree. Amongst these I marked Sergeant Culverin, and saw he had a gay silken sash about him, though I took little note of it then, being more concerned with another matter.

For we found most of the men in some alarm, for which I could not blame them, having that ominous sound of the bell in their ears continually. Moreover large masses of inky clouds were rolling up over the town, as though that booming were a witchcraft which was summoning some hellish means to overwhelm us. No wonder then, I say, that some of us had a sense of coming danger.

It seems the first fear that beset them was for the pinnaces, since they had heard shots down by the

shore ; and next for themselves, lest they should be overwhelmed with soldiers and unable to escape, since they had heard news from a negro that 150 small-shot and pike-men were already come to the town from Panama. Therefore, to allay these fears, our captain sent down his brother and Mr. Oxenham to the pinnaces with their party to search into the matter, and then join us at the King's Treasure-House.

'Thither we go now, lads,' cried Frank. 'They say it is strong, but I think there be those here who shall find a way in, since we know what its lining is.'

By this time all the stragglers, not a few of whom came from the governor's house, were gathered in, and, much encouraged by our captain's cheerfulness, we all went off to the King's Treasure-House. But just as we neared the place the pall of louring turgid cloud that overhung us was rent asunder. A dazzling flash of lightning lit up the deserted town, and instantly an awful crash of thunder drowned the noise of the bell. A few great drops fell heavily on the thirsty sand, and then in a moment there fell on us such a deluge of rain as none can picture who have not been in the tropical regions.

There was nothing but to run helter-skelter to cover, for the saving of our powder and bow-strings. The nearest shelter was a certain piazza or pent-house at the west end of the Treasure-House ; and to this we hurried, to find, for our no small comfort, that Captain John Drake was already there with his party, whereby we knew the pinnaces were safe.

The flare and crash of the storm was now almost unceasing, so that we could only hear now and again the hissing roar of the rain. Seeing that we had already suffered injury from the wet, and would have been undone entirely had we left our cover, we were forced to wait where we were till the storm abated. It was a great mishap that it fell so, for at our present post it was by no means possible to get into the Treasure-House, since on that side there was a wall of stone and lime, very strong and without openings, over which we might have broken our hearts entirely or ever we could have broken half-way in.

Thus we were forced to be idle, and stand listening to the awful voices of the storm which the devilish spells of the Spaniards had brought upon us. Many there who had never seen so sudden or terrible a tempest could hardly be comforted by our captain's promise that it would soon be past. Once more they began to talk together, harping still on the strength of the place, on old stories of the mighty witches there used to be amongst the Indians, and, above all, on the report of the soldiers' arrival, which Jack and Mr. Oxenham had found to be true.

'It was this way,' said Jack, as we gathered round in the pent-house. 'When we came down to the platform we found the pinnacle men alarmed for our safety, since they had heard so many shots, and parties of harquebusiers had been continually running down to them, crying, "*Que gente? que gente?*" "Then," said they, "we cried out we were English, whereat the

soldiers discharged their pieces blindly and ran away." At last came a negro, who would not go away, though they fired at him three or four times, but ever he cried out for Captain Drake, and craved to be taken aboard. This at last they did, when he told them of the 150 soldiers who had come to guard the town against the Cimaroons.'

Not knowing how many might still be in the town, and being broken in spirit, some with wounds and others with the terror of the storm, they began to talk openly of the danger of staying longer.

'Look you,' cried Frank at last, 'what silly child's talk is this? Did I not ever say I would bring you to the Treasure-House of the world? Why, so I have. And do I not say I will bring you off safe? Why, so, by God's help, I will. Is it not for this you have toiled and endured so far? And now you are here at the door, will you run away for fear of a few score of *braggadocio* Spaniards, who are shaking wellnigh out of their shoes for fear of you? Shame on you, lads! whom I thought were like-minded with me, and resolved to grow rich on these treacherous, false idolaters, come what may. Go all of you who will, and when you get back to England, tell them Frank Drake brought you to the mouth of the Treasure-House of the world, and you were afraid to fill your pockets! Tell them that, and blame not me if they cry you, "Out upon the fools!"'

Not a man stirred, though I think there were many had a mind to. It was growing near dawn, and we

knew that as soon as the Spaniards had gathered their wits together, and found out how small a number we were, they would return and make an end of us, if they could. It fell very fortunately that the storm now began to abate, so our captain, willing to save more murmuring and not desiring to allow the Spaniards too much time to pluck up heart, gave the word to move.

‘Stay you here, Jack,’ said he to his brother, ‘with Mr. Oxenham, to break open the Treasure-House, and carry down all the gold and pearls our pinnaces will hold. I with our strength will get back to the Plaza, and hold it till we have despatched all our business, and relieved these gallants of their great anxiety in keeping so much treasure.’

As he spoke these cheerful words he stepped forward, and to our horror rolled over in the sand. His two brothers had hold of him in a trice, and Jack took his head on his knee. As I saw him lie helpless there, so pale and death-like, and his blood flowing so fast as to fill the very footprints we had made, it seemed that the great bell, which boomed still its unceasing tocsin, was no longer sounding an alarm or spell, but rather ringing out the knell of my friend’s heroic spirit.

‘Frank,’ said Jack firmly, though I could note a strange tremor in his voice, ‘you are sore hurt; you must come to the boats.’

‘Not without the treasure,’ answered our captain; ‘not without something for the lads. It is nothing; only a scratch, that made me a little faint.’

‘No, Frank,’ said Joseph Drake, ‘you are sore hurt. Your boot is full of blood. You have lost enough to kill two men already. We will have no more of it.’

Sergeant Culverin was now at our captain’s feet. He had taken off his gay silk scarf and was very skilfully tying up Frank’s leg, to stay the bleeding.

‘My hearty thanks, Sergeant,’ said Frank, very feebly. ‘That is it! Now I can walk and despatch our business.’

‘That you never can,’ said Jack, ‘nor shall try neither. You must come back to the boats, Frank.’

‘No, Jack, I will not,’ answered our captain, so low we could hardly hear; ‘not without gold for the lads.’

‘Ay, but you must,’ urged his brother. ‘We will not stay another moment for twice the gold in all the Indies. Your life, lad, is worth more than that. What say you, mariners?’

The sailors all cried out that it was well said, that they had enough already, and not another finger would they stir till they knew their captain was past danger. So, in spite of all Frank’s protests, his two brothers raised him in their arms as gently as women, while the Sergeant put a skilfully-contrived sling under his legs, that his hurt might pain him less. So, recovering him a little with some drink, we started to carry him down to the pinnaces.

Still he would not be content, though we said we would only take him aboard to have his wound dressed and return. First to me, and then to another he pleaded; but all gave one answer, that they would not

stoop to pick up gold if the street were strewn with it, so it endangered his life a jot—not only out of their love for him, but also in regard to the great riches he could bring them to if he lived.

This last reason eased his mind a little ; but he was more grieved than ever when our surgeon had searched his wound in the pinnace, and told him it stood with his life not to go ashore again. Nor would he be in anywise content till we had promised to take that bark which we had seen before we left the harbour.

So as we rowed out whence we came the sun rose gloriously and the bell ceased its clamour ; and that most high and noteworthy attempt against the Treasure-House of the world was ended.

For such, indeed, it was in my judgment ; and, not to speak more, lest modesty be strained, I hold that every partaker in it should deem himself fortunate. Not only did we seventy men, under our unmatched commander, take the town and hold it for nigh on two hours, but of a surety we should have plundered a hundredfold more than we did had it not been for our captain's most unhappy hurt, or even for that storm, whereby we lost half an hour of time, as many think not without reason, through the hellish spells of those who rang the bell.

The Spaniards made shift to set one of the culverins on its carriage again before we were free of the haven, and barked at our heels a bit, yet could they not prevent us taking the ship, which we did without great resistance, and found it full of excellent wine, to our

great content. This we accepted with much thanks for their loving care of us, and carried away to a certain island about a league to the westward, which is called the Isle of *Bastimentos*, or Victuals, and there we went a-land.

CHAPTER XIX

‘A VERY notable piece of service, sir,’ said Sergeant Culverin to me the same afternoon, as we sat resting our weary limbs after a very excellent meal, which we made from hens, fruit, and the other good things on the island.

‘So it seems to me, Sergeant,’ said I, ‘though you know I have no experience of such matters ; but how goes the general now ?’

‘As well as we could wish,’ answered the Sergeant. ‘’Tis a hurt wants no Galen or Paracelsus to its mending. Take that of me, sir ; I have seen these things, and know. It is but a clean, pretty flesh-wound, and no harm done save the letting of so much blood, which I never saw lost in so large a measure and death kept off. A very tall man our general, sir, a very tall man.’

‘I am heartily glad to hear you say so, Sergeant,’ I said, being ever willing to humour him for the great service he had done me. ‘You have been acquainted with great captains in the Emperor’s service, and know one when you see him.’

‘Indeed, sir, I do,’ returned Culverin, very pleased ; ‘and I may tell you, at a word, he is one,—a very Gon-

salvo, sir. Yet I marvel how he came by such skill in dispositions, being wholly unlearned in the very rudiments of war. Why, sir, I spake to him at Port Pheasant concerning our fort of timber, and, believe me, he knew not the difference betwixt counterfort and cavaliero, or counterscarp and argine. And as for horsemanship, he has no more practice or contemplation of it than his cook's boy ; and yet a notable soldier !'

'It is as you say, Sergeant,' I answered ; 'and we must the more honour him that, being his own master, he is able by such excellent practice to show how soldierly have been his precepts ; and I grieve sorely that his skill and valour has met with no reward to-day.'

'No reward ?' said Culverin. 'Has your worship seen the sail that lies before the general's bower, where is the common-stick ?'

'No, Sergeant ; what do you mean ?'

'Tis naught ; and yet there are some indifferent foolish toys gathered there that will repay some of the blood that was spilt.'

'Why, how is this, Sergeant ? Did not the general charge that no man should load himself save with what came from the Treasure-House.'

'True, sir, so he did ; but, as I was saying, saving his most excellent dispositions, he is unlearned in things warlike. If a man make war, look you, he must make it according to the honoured, ancient, universal customs and discipline of war, whereof the honest pillaging of a captured town is one ; wherefore I made bold of my

bitter experience to supply our general's sweet ignorance, and lead some of the lads, when occasion was, to certain indifferent well-furnished houses. If some thereafter made free with certain trifling bars of silver from the governor's house it was by no furthering of mine. All I did was out of niceness for our general's honour. What think you those Spanish *cabaleros* would have thought of him if, when they had returned, they had found their houses unplundered? I warrant you, sir, they would have been sore grieved in their soldier-ship to think that a man who could deliver an assault so boldly against all their force and discipline was ignorant of the most common and ancient usage of the wars.'

Here one came to summon me to the general's presence, so I heard no more, though I found afterwards it was even as the Sergeant said, and that, far from coming out of the town empty handed as I thought, almost every man had carried off something, which all being gathered in the common store according to custom, made a show which was no little content to us.

Indeed, I think we were all very merry that afternoon, not only as seeing how easily we had captured the town, which bred in us no less courage for further attempts than hope of their success, but also because we had brought off our general safely, in comparison with which gain we held our loss of the gold as nothing, the more so as his hurt proved of no great account; nor was any other of our company more than slightly wounded, save our trumpeter, who had been slain on the spot.

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He approached, making legs very sweetly to us all, and a profound congee to our general, which we returned as decently as we might. After an offering of commendations, so stuffed with unheard-of conceits as I can never remember again, he told us the occasion of his coming.

'Of my mere goodwill, and as it were for my own unworthy honour, most admirable *cabaleros*,' said he, with an infinity of conceited gestures, 'I have conveyed myself festinately hither to your most honourable presence, moved thereto by the wholesome desire, with which my eyes were an hungered, to behold, view,

regard, and contemplate the most redoubtable captain and his heroical gentlemen who have attempted so great and incredible a matter with so few, paltry, and inconsiderable valiant numbers; being more especially moved thereto when it was discovered by the most excellent shooting of your honourable arrows that you were Englishmen, and no Frenchmen as we apprehended, seeing that now we knew our foe would hold themselves after the ancient gentle discipline of the wars, and be content with an honourable courteous pillage of our treasure, instead of seeking vulgar and bloody cruelty upon our persons; and being most especially moved thereto because his excellency, our honourable governor, being assured that you were gentlemen Englishmen and no pirate French, gladly consented to my coming; and lastly, being most singularly especially moved thereto, because his excellency, having been informed by certain townsmen that they knew your honourable captain, having at divers times been most courteously pillaged and kindly used by him these two years past, charged me to inquire as follows:

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Item. What victuals or other necessities you desire for the speeding of your voyage hence, which his excellency desires to furnish you withal, as far as he dare, having regard to his commission.'

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‘I thank you for your courtesy,’ said he, ‘and I pray you, after you have partaken of a poor supper at our hands, to return to his excellency with my most honourable commendations, and inform him thus: I am the same Drake he means. It is never my manner to poison my arrows. The said wounds may be cured with ordinary surgery. And as for victuals, we have already more than enough out of the abundance which he has already so hospitably provided us withal in this Island of *Bastimentos*; while for necessities, I want for none, save the special commodity which his country yields. Whereof not yet having enough to content myself and my company, I must unwillingly beseech his excellency to be at the pain of holding open his eyes for a space; since before I depart, if God lend me life and leave, I mean to reap some of your harvest, which you get out of the ground and send into Spain to trouble all the earth!’

The little gallant seemed a good deal taken aback at this unlooked-for answer, but, recovering himself, promised to convey it to the governor treasured in the inmost sanctuary of his bosom.

‘And, if I may without offence move such a question,’ he ended by saying, ‘what should be the honourable cause of your worthy departing (seeing what are your sweet desires) from a town where is above 360 tons of silver ready for the Plate Fleet, and much more gold in value in iron chests in the King’s Treasure-House?’

‘Because,’ said Harry, whom Frank motioned to speak, ‘our captain was wounded, and we value his life beyond all the gold in the Indies.’

‘Then, most valiant *cabaleros*,’ answered our pouncet-box, ‘give me leave to say that, as I am a gentleman, the pre-eminent excellence of your reason in departing is hardly overbalanced by your unmeasured courage in attempting.’

With that we fell to supper, during which we did all honour to our guest; all of us, but Frank, being much taken with his fantastic courtesy and pretty humours. Harry and Mr. Oxenham were particularly moved to him, and he to them, so that all supper-time they vied with each other in the extravagance of their compliments, till I thought the little gallant could swallow no more.

When he took his leave at last our captain entreated him very courteously, and bestowed certain gifts as most likely to content him. So we conducted him to his boat to make our farewells.

‘I protest, *cabaleros*,’ said he, a little flushed with a good share of the contents of our prize, ‘I protest I have never been so honoured of any in my life.’

‘And give me leave to say,’ answered Harry, ‘I have never seen an embassy so admirably discharged.’

‘I kiss your hands,’ said the Don, ‘and, as I am a gentleman, shall joy no more, till I have the felicity of crossing rapiers with you upon your next attempt.’

‘Till then, by my soul’s honour,’ returned Harry, ‘I, too, die; nor could I conceive greater honour than to colour my blade with such courtly blood as your excellency’s.’

‘Nay, sir, I protest, as I am a gentleman, the honour would be mine. I could desire no higher distinction than to feel your point between these unworthy ribs.’

‘I pray heaven,’ said Mr. Oxenham, ‘your joy come not so soon as to prevent my poor flesh first kissing your very bright particular blade.’

‘I kiss both your hands, sir,’ said the Don, ‘and trust we may be all sweetly sorted to our most gentlemanly desires.’

With such like compliment, and an infinite making of legs, we at length took leave of him, greatly entertained with his humours, and delighted with the renown which our captain had won by this and his former exploits.

That evening our captain held a council to determine what further we should attempt, and thereto was called Diego, the negro whom we had brought from Nombre de Dios, that he might be questioned as to the present condition of the town.

‘Soldiers and gold all the same what little Don tells,’ he said, grinning all over his good-humoured face. ‘Nombre very full of soldiers, and Treasure-House very strong, all because of my people, the Cimaroons. I

know better way to get gold from Dons than to burn fingers after it in Nombre.'

'Say you so, Diego?' said Frank, in his kindly way, which always won the heart of these people. 'A very worthy tall fellow you seem. Let us hear about it, and I doubt not you shall hear of something good too.'

'Yes, I know,' answered the black fellow, showing his white teeth from ear to ear. 'I know Captain Drake; so do Cimaroons. Spaniards beat Cimaroons; Captain Drake beats Spaniards. Mighty tall man Captain Drake amongst Cimaroons.'

'Well, well, good Diego,' says Frank, very pleased, 'but what of the gold?'

'Why, this way,' says the negro, looking very cunning; 'Treasure-House very strong, best get gold before it done got to treasure-house.'

'Yes, but how?' says Frank.

'Why, easy as a fall,' says Diego, grinning with all his might. 'I go to Cimaroons, and say to chief, "Captain Drake wants gold."—"Mass! then bring his nobleness here," says the chief; so you go up through the woods with the Cimaroons, and they show you—and they show you,' he went on, hardly able to speak for glee, 'where to stop the great mule trains that come from Panama to meet the Plate Fleet.'

With that he opened his wide mouth, laid his head back, and roared with laughter, rubbing his hands between his knees, and dancing an ungainly measure to the sound of his own merriment.

This and other intelligences which we had from the

great content. This we accepted with much thanks for their loving care of us, and carried away to a certain island about a league to the westward, which is called the Isle of *Bastimentos*, or Victuals, and there we went a-land.

CHAPTER XIX

‘A VERY notable piece of service, sir,’ said Sergeant Culverin to me the same afternoon, as we sat resting our weary limbs after a very excellent meal, which we made from hens, fruit, and the other good things on the island.

‘So it seems to me, Sergeant,’ said I, ‘though you know I have no experience of such matters ; but how goes the general now ?’

‘As well as we could wish,’ answered the Sergeant. ‘’Tis a hurt wants no Galen or Paracelsus to its mending. Take that of me, sir ; I have seen these things, and know. It is but a clean, pretty flesh-wound, and no harm done save the letting of so much blood, which I never saw lost in so large a measure and death kept off. A very tall man our general, sir, a very tall man.’

‘I am heartily glad to hear you say so, Sergeant,’ I said, being ever willing to humour him for the great service he had done me. ‘You have been acquainted with great captains in the Emperor’s service, and know one when you see him.’

‘Indeed, sir, I do,’ returned Culverin, very pleased ; ‘and I may tell you, at a word, he is one,—a very Gon-

salvo, sir. Yet I marvel how he came by such skill in dispositions, being wholly unlearned in the very rudiments of war. Why, sir, I spake to him at Port Pheasant concerning our fort of timber, and, believe me, he knew not the difference betwixt counterfort and cavaliero, or counterscarp and argine. And as for horsemanship, he has no more practice or contemplation of it than his cook's boy; and yet a notable soldier!

'It is as you say, Sergeant,' I answered; 'and we must the more honour him that, being his own master, he is able by such excellent practice to show how soldierly have been his precepts; and I grieve sorely that his skill and valour has met with no reward to-day.'

'No reward?' said Culverin. 'Has your worship seen the sail that lies before the general's bower, where is the common-stick?'

'No, Sergeant; what do you mean?'

'Tis naught; and yet there are some indifferent foolish toys gathered there that will repay some of the blood that was spilt.'

'Why, how is this, Sergeant? Did not the general charge that no man should load himself save with what came from the Treasure-House.'

'True, sir, so he did; but, as I was saying, saving his most excellent dispositions, he is unlearned in things warlike. If a man make war, look you, he must make it according to the honoured, ancient, universal customs and discipline of war, whereof the honest pillaging of a captured town is one; wherefore I made bold of my

bitter experience to supply our general's sweet ignorance, and lead some of the lads, when occasion was, to certain indifferent well-furnished houses. If some thereafter made free with certain trifling bars of silver from the governor's house it was by no furthering of mine. All I did was out of niceness for our general's honour. What think you those Spanish *cabaleros* would have thought of him if, when they had returned, they had found their houses unplundered? I warrant you, sir, they would have been sore grieved in their soldier-ship to think that a man who could deliver an assault so boldly against all their force and discipline was ignorant of the most common and ancient usage of the wars.'

Here one came to summon me to the general's presence, so I heard no more, though I found afterwards it was even as the Sergeant said, and that, far from coming out of the town empty handed as I thought, almost every man had carried off something, which all being gathered in the common store according to custom, made a show which was no little content to us.

Indeed, I think we were all very merry that afternoon, not only as seeing how easily we had captured the town, which bred in us no less courage for further attempts than hope of their success, but also because we had brought off our general safely, in comparison with which gain we held our loss of the gold as nothing, the more so as his hurt proved of no great account; nor was any other of our company more than slightly wounded, save our trumpeter, who had been slain on the spot.

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This and other intelligences which we had from the

negro, on further questioning him, bred in us great hope of making our voyage, though our other plans failed. For in all they agreed and confirmed what Captain Drake had learned on his two former voyages; which was that on the arrival of the Plate Fleet from Spain great quantities of gold, silver, and pearls came across the isthmus from Panama to Nombre de Dios, partly by *recuas* or mule trains, and partly in frigates by way of the Rio de Chagres, which ran into the sea nigh to where we were from a place called Venta Cruz, within six leagues of Panama.

When therefore we had refreshed ourselves at the island two days, our captain sent a party under his brother John to search this river, with orders, after he had made full discovery of it, to join Captain Ranse and the ships at the Isles of Pinos, whither we presently set sail.

It was our captain's intent now to attempt Carthagena before the garrison got wind of our being on the coast, but Captain Ranse was not willing to join us, thinking we stood in too great danger after we had discovered ourselves at Nombre de Dios. Frank was not sorry to dismiss him, I know, for at all times he very hardly endured to have another joined in command with him. Therefore, as soon as John Drake returned from his discovery, we parted company with Sir Edward Horsey's crew, and remained to make our voyage, if we could, without them, notwithstanding all the dangers they feared.

Yet our captain would not altogether give up his

desire to visit Carthagena, whither we sailed with all speed, though much delayed with light airs, calms, and want of hands ; for, now that our company was divided between the ships and the pinnaces, each craft was under-manned. So it fell out that a Spanish pinnace preceded us a few hours, bringing news of our coming, and we found they had made so large a provision of horse, foot, and ordnance for our entertainment that, being unwilling to trouble them further, we craved them to bestow on us a great ship of Seville, of some two hundred and forty tons burthen, which we found well laden in the harbour, and this they did, though not so graciously as our moderation warranted.

Having in this way, and more certainly by letters found in two other prizes which we took, learned that our presence was known all along the coast, it remained for us to take some course with our difficulties, which at last we did, and in such wise as gave me fresh proof, if any were wanting, of that extraordinary resolution in our captain which seemed to grow every day more constant and heroical.

‘There is no shift for it but the Cimaroons,’ said Frank to me, as we lay off the islands of St. Bernardo, some three leagues from Carthagena. ‘We must take to our pinnaces till we find them, and hide along the coast, so that the Spaniards may think we have departed, which I am resolved not to do till our voyage be made.’

‘But how can we continue longer on the coast?’ said I. ‘It may take us weeks to find the Cimaroons, and we have but little store of victuals.’

‘We can make provision with our pinnaces could we find some place to hide. There are plenty of victuallers to be taken all along the coast.’

‘That would be possible,’ I answered, ‘if we could properly man our pinnaces ; but this we cannot do, not having hands enough in the ships as it is.’

‘And yet there is no other way,’ said Frank, musing ; and then, looking very hard at me, he went on after a pause : ‘What a mercy it would be if one of our ships were taken from us !’

‘What do you mean ?’ asked I, aghast.

‘Why,’ says he, ‘then we should have enough men to man the pinnaces.’

‘True,’ I answered ; ‘but how should we get back to England ?’

‘God would send us means,’ says he. ‘A smart frigate or so would fall into our hands when we wanted it. Indeed, it would be a mercy if one ship were taken ! Then we could make a store-house of the other, and make our voyage with the full-manned pinnaces.’

‘Perhaps it would be well,’ I answered ; ‘but such a thing is not to be looked for.’

‘Cortez burnt his ships,’ said Frank, as though he were thinking, and had not heard me. ‘Why should not I destroy mine ? Yet I think he cannot have loved his as I love mine, the smartest sailers that ever left Plymouth harbour.’

‘Frank,’ cried I, ‘this is madness ; besides, your company would never permit it.’

‘Not permit it !’ says he, with a sort of dull fire under

his frown. 'None of my company must talk so, Jasper. And yet I love the lads for their love of the ships; nor must a captain, who would be cheerfully followed, strain obedience further than is necessary. A great captain, as I trust by God's help to be ere I die, differs only from his fellows in that he is readily obeyed. Any man of ordinary wit can see what should be done, yet must he often abstain from commanding it because he knows how hardly he will be obeyed, and as often, if he do command it, find the labour of procuring obedience too great for his constancy. But your great captain fears not to command anything, seeing he is always cheerfully obeyed, and why, lad? Because by policy he shall cheat those under him into a cheerful willingness towards all he intends.'

'Well,' said I, 'I will call you before all men a great captain, if to-morrow you can make your men cheerfully fire either of these ships.'

'Then, lad,' says he, 'I pray you go fetch hither Tom Moone, the carpenter of the *Swan*. That is my own ship, and that is the one I must burn. To-morrow arise betimes and come with me fishing in the pinnace and you shall see how, by my policy, my brother and his crew shall willingly fire her.'

I did all he said, and in the early morning we were off to the fishing, for about the island where we lay was a great store of fishes. As we passed the *Swan* we fell aboard of her, and Frank cried out to his brother to come fishing with him. John Drake jumped up at once, willingly agreeing to follow us presently. We cast off, but before

we had gone but a few strokes Frank asked us if the *Swan* did not sit very low in the water, which we saw at once that she did.

‘Ahoy, Jack!’ sung out our captain then, ‘what makes your bark so deep?’

‘Nay, I knew not that she was over deep,’ says Jack, and called to the steward to see what water was in her.

Presently there was a mighty splashing, and up comes the steward, wet to the waist, crying out that the ship was full of water. All was bustle in a moment, some of the crew rushing to the pumps and some splashing about the hold to search for the leak, Tom Moone being the most forward there.

We fell aboard her again at once to offer our help. John Drake would have none of it, but only begged to be excused his attendance on his brother.

‘We have hands enough,’ said he, ‘and will have her free in a trice. We have not pumped these six weeks, so what strange chance has befallen to give us six foot of water in the night is more than I can tell. But I pray you go on with your fishing; we shall want some good stuffing come dinner-time, after our pumping.’

Besides our captain and myself, there were none with us, I think, who had any suspicion of what this strange chance was, so that our men were not a little surprised to find on our return that, though out of their great love for their dainty bark the *Swan’s* company had wellnigh worked their lives out at the pumps, yet had they freed but a few inches of water.

‘What, so bad!’ cried Frank to his brother, who

looked over the side very weary. 'Nay, then, you shall have our help now, while you eat your dinner.'

With that, acting his part better than I could have looked for in so plain and blunt a nature, he sprang on board, and with his own hands fell to work at one of the pumps with such good will that I thought to see it burst. All our company, set on by his example, worked no less hard; yet, though we continued in shifts till three in the afternoon, we had freed the water little more than a foot, nor could any man find where the leak was.

Wearied out at last, John Drake, with his master and crew, gathered round Frank to consult him as to what order was to be taken, for up till now our general had not said a word, save to encourage men at the pumps, seeing that his brother was captain of the ship.

'What shall we do, Frank?' said poor John Drake. 'We shall have to pump the whole North Ocean out of her before she is dry.'

'Indeed, Jack,' says our captain, 'I cannot tell what order to take to save her.'

'Well, I care not what comes of her,' says Jack desperately. 'I think the devil has got her for good and all. It is some hellish Indian witchcraft of these Spaniards. I am at my wits' end with her, so do what you will.'

The whole company were plainly weary of their ship, no less than was their captain, and crowded round to hear what Frank would say, very hopefully; for they had all come to think there was no hole so deep or miry that he could not draw them out of it.

'If you leave it so to me,' says Frank, 'I tell you there is only one way. The ship is dead, that is plain. It is my ship, and it is lost by no fault of master or mariner. If any is to blame it is I. You, Jack, I would have go aboard the admiral with your master and take command of her, and I will be content with a pinnace till I can capture you a smart frigate in place of this rotten tub, and incontinently we will fire her that the Spaniards may find their witchcraft has availed them nothing.'

I think this advice astonished the company a good deal, but presently they were very content with it, saying it was most worthy of their general, who was always as ready to take blame on himself as to find resolute remedies for mishaps of others. There were a few who had sailed in her the two former voyages, and would gladly have made an effort to save her, being ashamed to lose her ; but when her owner so boldly gave her up and took all "blame on himself, they were very glad to be rid of her.

In a few minutes the pinnaces were all laid aboard of her, so that every man might take from her whatever he wished, and thereupon poor John Drake, his eyes full of tears, fired her with his own hand. Poor Jack ! my heart bled for him, but I knew it was the only saving of our venture.

So it came about as Frank had said. Not only had the whole company been glad enough to destroy the ship of which they were so proud, not only had he got his way, hard as it seemed, but by his generosity to his

brother, his hearty sharing of their labour, and his cheerful resolution through it all, he stood higher with the whole company than ever he did before.

‘Well, Frank,’ said I, as we sailed away next day towards the Sound of Darien with the *Pasha* and our fully-manned pinnaces, ‘you have your will, but it was a sorry trick to play them.’

‘Nought but a bit of policy,’ laughed he, ‘such as all commanders must use at times.’

‘Save you, lad, from Machiavelli and all his works,’ said I, ‘for I think you are fast growing Italianate. But, tell me, how was it done?’

‘Why, with a spike-gimlet,’ says he. ‘Tom Moone pleaded hard for his beloved bark, so that my heart almost melted. Then he said he would get his throat cut; but I told him to be secret, to do it close to the keel at night, and lay something over the holes that the flow of the water should make no noise to betray him, and so it was done. It was a desperate piece of service, I know, but Tom Moone shall have cause to remember what he did for me at this pass.’

And so indeed he had; for when Frank equipped his fleet for that renowned voyage in which he encompassed the world, he made this trusty carpenter captain of the *Canter* or *Christopher*, as it was afterwards named.

CHAPTER XX

By the light of the flaming ship we had set sail. It was a moving sight to see this precious link with home a mass of shooting flame below a pall of lurid fire-flecked smoke. A sea of molten gold was her death-bed, and, as we sailed slowly onward before the gentle night wind, the fiery reflection stretched out after us till it faded to fitful gleams on the crests of the waves, as though they bore us farewell kisses from our lost ship.

‘A true swan is she to the end,’ said Harry softly, as though moved by the scene. ‘Beautiful she was in life, yet nothing in it was so beautiful as her departing from it.’

We watched her burn down lower and lower, till she was nothing but a glowing ember on the dark plain of the sea, and then in a moment she was gone for ever. It was like losing an old friend, and there was not one for the next few days who did not feel oppressed with evil foreboding at the loss of that staunch craft that had brought such luck to our captain.

We could not even lighten our hearts with the music, for Frank was very earnest to depart as secretly as we could, that the Spaniards might suppose us entirely gone from that coast by reason of the loss of our ship.

Thus, attempting nothing that might betray us, we found on the fifth day a most fair haven in the Sound of Darien, where we could anchor the *Pasha* out of all ken of the Spaniards, and refresh ourselves till such time as the storm we had raised all along the coast should be blown over.

It was a place as fair as Port Pheasant, where a man might have been content to dwell all his days. A pretty town we built there, as Diego showed us how, of boughs and brakes and flowers, in a space which we cleared in the dense forest. Here our smith set up his forge, our fletcher his shop for the ordering of our bows and arrows, our butcher his block, and our shoemakers their lasts. Butts were erected for bow practice, a lawn made for our bowls, and ground prepared for quoits, leaping, wrestling, and all other sports that our captain could devise for making us forget our losses and breed a hopeful spirit for future attempts.

Half of us worked while the others played, day and day about; but for me it was all play. For my work, having skill for it, was to hunt the livelong day up in the forest-clad hills for the hogs, conies, deer, and birds that lived half tame in their solitudes; or, rocked on those azure seas, to lure the strange fish that swarmed about the gilded rocks, with great pelicans and scarlet cranes for comrades at the sport.

At such times, as I lay in some fairy glade above our little town, or half asleep in our little gondola, I could hearken to the merry tinkle of the anvil and the jolly laugh of the bellows mingling with the cries and songs

of the mariners at their work and play; and, listening to the homely sounds, mellowed and transformed by the tropic glory of earth and sky and sea, I could fancy that the old life was gone with all its care and hideousness, being changed by the rich spirit of the West to one long May-day.

In fifteen days our ship and pinnaces with this light labour were refitted, and our captain with two of the pinnaces set sail for Rio Grande in search of provisions and intelligences. I remained behind with John Drake to search the coast in the other pinnace, in order that if possible we might, by Diego's help, meet with the Cimaroons.

For six days we rowed up and down the Main aloof the shore, but found no trace of those whom we sought. In these days I saw much of John Drake, being all day and night in the pinnace with him, and I came to love his simple, steadfast nature more than I ever had before, and wondered to see how great was his control over the men by the very earnestness of his worship of Frank, whose orders to him were as the command of a god, to be carried out at all costs. It seemed as though, when once he had a direction from his brother, all other thoughts were dismissed from his mind. Any possibility of a different course being good could never find a place in him.

So day after day we rowed hopelessly along that lovely shore, in spite of the fearful heat. To every suggestion I could make he had but one answer.

'Frank told us to row aloof the shore and find the

Cimaroons,' he would say, 'and he knows best. Cheerily, men, now! As like as not we shall find them beyond the point ahead.'

To me the thing seemed hopeless. To find a few negroes in that vast wilderness of forest by rowing along the shore appeared little better than a wild-goose chase. Still I believed in Frank almost as much as his brother did, and still more was encouraged by Diego, who continued to urge us on as he sat in the forepart, chin in hand, gazing fixedly into the forest.

It was on the seventh day, as we were almost worn out with the growing heat of the sun, and all the shore was hushed before the coming fire of the noonday, that Diego suddenly leaped up and, casting both his hands above his head, gave forth a yell so loud and strident as almost to stop your heart.

Again with his hand to his mouth he shot his fiendish call towards the shore, as though to summon a legion of devils to his side.

'What is it, Diego?' cried Jack.

'See, captain, see! There lie my people asleep. I can see. Up there on the hill. I can see a new hut.'

To our eyes all was the same wild waste of foliage, but he saw more, as we soon knew, for faintly out of the forest came an answering shout.

'I knew Frank was right,' said Jack triumphantly. 'He knew where to find them.' And away we went to the shore. Sure enough Frank was right; for as our keel grated on the golden sand two pelicans rose lazily from where they had been standing, a bowshot to

our right, and winged their solemn flight along the shore.

Something we knew must have flushed them, but we could see nothing in the dense brakes. Diego hailed again, and then we saw a black face peep stealthily at us. Poor folk! they dared not come out, for all we had one of their kin with us. They had been too often betrayed to their tormentors by such means before.

'*Que gente? que gente?*' cried the black head over his bent bow, as we could plainly see.

'*Gente de Drague!*' cries Diego, leaping out of the boat and running towards them. '*Drague! Drague!*'

So it was they always called our general, since his name came hard to their half-Spanish tongues. And what a name it was to them we soon saw. For, after a strange, discordant babbling between Diego and the Cimarron, a loud cry went up in the bushes and out rushed some score of dancing yelling fiends. Never saw I greater delight or heartier welcome than in these poor folk. For a good space we could do nothing with them, for their dancing and leaping round us and embracing of our feet, especially Captain John's, to his great discomfort, being a plain, simple man, not used to homage.

There was no peace for us till Diego begged that we should suffer them to bear us to their huts, which request our captain granted, leaving two men with the pinnace. Their joy was then complete, and each black fellow stood in front of one of our men, bending his back for him to mount, which at last we all did, seeing how earnest they were; and so, with no more ado with

the biggest of us than if he had been a baby, they trotted off, laughing and singing up the steep path that led to their huts.

We were soon set down in a little hamlet like our own town, but much prettier and more artfully constructed, because of their greater skill. Here each vied with another to set before us delicate fruits and fowls and a certain fermented liquor which they had, very pleasant to the taste and medicinale to the spirits. So like kings we lay in those leafy bowers feasting merrily, each with a grinning henchman or two to do his lightest bidding. Indeed I think, had we permitted, they would have crowned us with flowers, and seen us eat our banquet like that dainty gallant Horatius Flaccus with his boon companions.

By the end of our dinner we were all like brothers with these merry folk, after the manner of English mariners, though I think half of our company could not understand two words of Spanish. Their chief was soon in close talk with John and me and Diego, and we broached our business to him. It is an easy embassy when both parties desire one thing. Our wish, no less than theirs, was for them to meet the general and arrange our comedy for the entertainment of the Spaniards. In a very short space it was agreed that we should leave two of our men with the chief and take two of his to the general, in token of pure goodwill and amity between us, and that they should come down to a river which ran into the sea half-way between the haven, where our ships lay and certain head-

lands towards Nombre de Dios, which we always called 'The Cabezas.' This river we called the 'Rio Diego,' after our faithful Cimaroon ally.

There was some difficulty in choosing our hostages, since every mariner there wished to stay, preferring the cheery homage and good fare of the Cimaroons to hard work and 'Poor John' in the pinnace. At last it was settled by lot, and we bore away again amidst the like rejoicings that had welcomed us, and with a fair wind came the same night to our ship.

It seemed to all men a plain work of God for the encouraging of our allies that the very next day our general, with two frigates besides the pinnaces, came sailing into 'Port Plenty.' So he now named our haven, having seen by this first voyage how well we could supply ourselves from the victuallers that sailed to Nombre de Dios and Carthagena, and from the Indians about the Rio Grande, as well as from the Spanish storehouses thereon.

'If a man may judge by this fair beginning,' said he when we came to speak of it, 'no name was ever better bestowed, for besides a great store of provision which we obtained from the river, I have taken five or six frigates and a bark, laden with live hogs, hens, maize, and other provision which we require. But I gave away all the prizes, except the two best, to the Spaniards for their pain in supplying us so bountifully ; and there are those we kept.'

He pointed to where the two captured frigates lay, and went on to tell me how he had obtained what was

dearer to him than victuals, and that was divers opinions of himself that prevailed amongst the Spaniards. It was always his way while he kindly entertained his prisoners to get them to speak about himself, and if their answers were to his mind I think they often got off the more lightly. His enemies, for even that noble spirit has enemies in these backbiting times, set this down to a sordid love of flattery, but I know it was from no such cause. For love of merriment he did it, no less than to encourage his men, who joyed to hear the dread their captain begot amongst the Spaniards. No man ever knew better than he how to win the confidence and respect of his men, and this was one way he used to that end. And no man was ever more laughter-loving than he, and no jest did he love so much as to hear how he frightened the Spaniards. For those reasons and no other he was wont to question his prisoners, and I hold it foul slander to say that heroic navigator was pleased with sordid flattery.*

I remember well his first words were of this when, the same day that he returned to Port Plenty, I boarded his frigate with Jack.

'Why, Jasper,' says he, taking my hand in his cheery way, 'you have missed a merry time in chasing Cima-rooms, though God be praised that has so blessed your search. What think you they say of me, man? It is a jest worth more laughter than all the company could furnish in a month. Why, man, they say it is a devil. None but a devil or a saint, they swear, with but a handful of men could have quietly entered and held

the Treasure-House of the mightiest emperor under the sun as we did. And since, being a "Lutheran dog," I am no saint, I must perforce be a devil, and you, my lad, an imp of Satan.'

'By which sharp reasoning,' says Mr. Oxenham, 'they save their gentility when they run away.'

'And like Christian gentlemen,' cried Harry, 'when the fiend appears cry, "Get thee behind me, Satan," and incontinently turn their backs.'

'Yet,' said I, 'it seems to me that they would serve their gentility better by a more courteous appellation of their enemy.'

'And so your true Castilian does,' says Frank. 'For all the wrong they have done me, yet I hold your true Castilian a gentleman and a man of honour, and no coward. Such a one I took off Tolu, and as we supped together on the good things which for our trouble in chasing him he had felt bound to bestow on us, he told a different tale, and set no horns on my head.'

'No,' broke in Harry; 'it was all your most chastened, precise, five-foot-in-the-blade, good manners. "By your most high-bred courtesy," says he, "I now know for truth what gentlemen say of the valiant Captain Drake, whose felicity and valour are so pre-eminent that Sir Mars, the god of war, and Sir Neptune, the god of the sea, seem to wait on all his attempts, which same notwithstanding are eclipsed, overshadowed, and put out of countenance by the nobility and generosity of his carriage towards the vanquished, whereby defeat is made sweeter than victory." And with such like good report

he continued to discharge his great pieces in the captain's honour all supper-time till we were wellnigh deafened with the thunders of his courtesy.'

'It was a very high mass of worship,' said Mr. Oxenham, 'till, by this light, we began to doubt if we were not saints after all.'

'God forbid,' says Frank; 'as you love salvation be an English devil rather than a Spanish saint.'

'Well, here are our brother devils,' cried Harry, as the two Cimaroons we had brought were led forward by John Drake. 'Order yourselves, signors, to receive the embassy of the Prince of Darkness.'

So the negroes came forward and testified of the joy their whole nation had at our captain's coming, because of the renown he had won amongst them by his proceedings at Nombre de Dios and in his two former voyages, and finally most respectfully told him how their chief waited for him at the Rio Diego, to see if haply it was his pleasure to use them against their common enemies.

A council of war was held to consider how far we could trust these people, and what course we should take forthwith: whereat, after his usual manner, Frank listened very attentively to all our advices, and then took his own; which was forthwith to move our whole force up to the Rio Diego, where John Drake and I had discovered an excellent haven amongst the islands that were clustered there.

I went on before with Frank in his pinnace to show him where we should meet with the Cimaroon chief,

which we did very joyfully at the place appointed. The negroes' joy at meeting our captain was so great that it was long before we could get to any quiet speech with them, but at last we went aside with the chief into the leafy bower which served him for a house, and Frank told him how he wished his people to help us get gold and silver from the Spaniards.

'Gold and silver!' said the negro, a giant in growth and strength who spoke good Spanish. 'Do you mean gold and silver?'

'Yes, surely,' said Frank; 'what else could we want?'

'Why, even that which we want,' said the negro.

'And what is that?' Frank asked.

'Revenge,' answered the negro, 'revenge for all the wrongs those hell-hounds have wreaked on us.'

'Why, so do I,' said Frank cheerfully, 'and therefore will I take from them what I want most and what they love best, even gold and silver.'

'Ah, but they love something better than that,' said the chief eagerly, as though clutching at a hope. 'They love life better. And we want something more than gold, we want blood—Spanish blood! To dip our arms in to the elbow, and our legs to the knees,' he went on, with the glare of a wild beast in his eyes. 'Help us to get that, captain, and you shall have all the gold and silver you can want. But for us it is not enough. What your wrongs have been I know not, but ours are such that gold and silver will not avenge them. Had you felt the lash curl round your ribs, had you seen

your comrades tortured to new effort when they dropped to die of sickness and fatigue, had you seen a little part of what happens every day to my people, you would forget gold and silver, and all but blood, and never joy but when you saw it bubbling out from the rent your knife had made.'

We were both shocked at the savageness of our new ally, and Frank told him in his plain blunt way that if they attempted anything together the prisoners must be his, as well as the gold, though in the fight they might kill as many as they would. The poor savage was sadly disappointed, and would, I think, have hardly agreed to it if Frank had not fed him with a picture of the havoc our arrows and small shot would make amongst their enemies, and how sorely they grieved over the loss of gold.

'I know, I know,' said the Cimaroon sadly; 'and often we take gold from them, not from love of it, but in despite of them. So be it as you say, captain, for you we will follow to death against the Spaniards, whatever be your will. Yet had I known it was gold you wanted, there is plenty we have taken and sunk in the rivers which you might have had, but now they are so swollen with the rains that there is no coming at it. Nor can we take any till the dry season begins, for in the rainy months they do not carry any treasure by land, because the ways are so evil.'

This was most unhappy news. It was nearly five months still before the dry season began. To attempt with our pinnaces to capture the gold frigates coming

down the Chagres river was madness, seeing that since our coming we heard they were always guarded by two galleys. To wait five months was to run great risk not only of being attacked in strength by the Spaniards, but also by sickness, which is very rife in those regions during this time.

Another council was held as soon as our strength joined us, and once more Frank heard willingly our opinions and followed his own, which was to make a lodgment in a hidden part of the coast, whence, that we might employ our leisure as well as gather provisions, we could from time to time sally out to annoy the Spaniards and satisfy ourselves. Our captain further resolved to establish magazines besides those we already had about Port Plenty, so that if one were discovered we might have others to supply us.

To this end the *Pasha* was brought in through the islands with great labour and much dangerous pilotage within a few bowshots of the Main, and there moored hard by a reasonable island, in such a place as even if she were discovered, which was wellnigh impossible, so shrouded was she by trees, no enemy could come at her by night or even by day without great risk of falling amongst shoals.

Our island contained some three acres of good flat ground, which our captain next began to fortify, setting out, after the best manner used in the wars, a triangular fort made of timber and earth dug from the trench about it. Harry having, as I have said, no little skill in these matters was set over this work, Culverin being

quartermaster under him. The Sergeant therefore was now in great spirits, for I think the ships, and still more the pinnaces, were as little to his mind as ever. His stiff back and large form could never accommodate itself to the straight quarters and uneasy motion to which he was condemned at sea. Now, it was a real pleasure to see his gaunt figure striding once more a-land, directing the Cimaroons, of whom another band had joined us, as nicely as though he were entrenching the Emperor's own camp.

'Sea wars I will never decry again,' said he, when I went to give him joy, 'especially since Captain Drake is of that profession ; yet for dignity, honour, and contemplation how can they compare to land wars? Truly, the world lost much, sir, when Captain Drake became a sailor.'

'Yet he is an indifferent good sea-captain, Sergeant,' said I.

'Yes, sir ; too good, greatly too good,' said Culverin. 'Few men, look you, have been born with such soldiership. See, now, the care he bestows in fortifying his camp, after the true manner of Julius Cæsar, and yet he has never read a word of the *Commentaries*. It is there he shows it. For, saving your wisdom, your true soldiership is not valour, as many think. Valiant blades we have in plenty in every land. Your great soldier must know what to fear and when to fear, and so guard himself. To fear valiantly is your philosopher's stone of victory. Take that of me, sir.'

I think we were all of Sergeant Culverin's opinion, except perhaps Mr. Oxenham. He was ever a reckless man who could not fear anything, and so, as all men know, was afterwards brought to his evil end on a Spanish gallows. But the rest of us were glad to see what care our general took that we should pass our five months in safety, and above all the Cimaroons, who saw in our preparations a sure token that we were resolved to stand by them.

Nor did they leave us without testimony of their satisfaction. It was like fairyland to see how a little town built of Palmito boughs rose up as if by magic upon our island, with fair houses for all our company; and afterwards they so laboured at our fort that in two weeks the ordnance and artillery were all in position within it, and Frank was free to depart in search of victuals and intelligence.

On the 7th of October he bid us farewell amidst a merry burst from our music, and bore away for Carthagena, leaving his brother John as governor of the fort over those who were left behind. Both Harry and I remained to assist him in governing the Cimaroons and completing our works. Had we but known the sorrow that was to come on us ere those two pinnaces returned, I think our parting would have been less blithe. But as it was we feared nothing; for our exploit at Nombre de Dios and all that had followed, no less than the constant report we had from the Cimaroons and our prisoners of the terror we had created, had bred in us a sort of reckless courage, as well as a laughing con-

tempt for our enemies, which made us think that no attempt was too hard for us.

I cannot wonder at it or blame any for their overweening confidence, seeing what our handful of unknown mariners had done against the mighty power of the King of Spain. Surely never had folly, for I hold contempt of a brave enemy no less, a better excuse. Would it had had a lighter punishment !

It was on this wise that it came about. At the Cativaas Islands, some five leagues away from our fort, was a frigate laden with planks. She was a prize Frank's pinnaces had taken in the Rio Grande and left there till she should be wanted. But in a storm she was driven hard ashore and now lay disabled. Out of tenderness for his ordnance and crew Frank ordered that our first care should be to fetch away her timbers and planks, to make platforms for the former and good huts for the latter.

For the rains still continued. The island was a slough of mire wherever we worked, and the bowers which the Cimaroons made us hardly availed to keep out the deluge of rain that fell every day. Therefore as soon as Frank was gone we set about our work, John Drake going himself to order the matter in the pinnace called *Lion*. I went with him and about half a crew besides.

It was the second afternoon after Frank's departure that we were returning to our fort with a load of planks, when we descried a deep-laden frigate making for Nombre de Dios.

‘Will you not attempt her, Captain John?’ said one of the men, a quartermaster called Allen.

‘Not I,’ says Jack; ‘though nothing would be more to my mind had we finished the work which our general set us to do.’

‘What matter of that?’ cried Allen; ‘it is but half an hour’s work to make her ours. A pretty prize she will be for us, and I don’t see why the rest should have all the sport and we all the labour.’

‘Well, it is just because the general so ordered it,’ says Jack. ‘That is enough for me and enough for you.’

‘Nay, then,’ said Allen, ‘I know the general never meant us to be forbidden fair booty. What say you, lads?’ and the men all said he was right, and that they were for attempting the frigate.

‘Then must you be mad,’ cried Jack. ‘You know not how the frigate is provided, while you are sure we are cumbered with planks and have no weapons.’

‘We have a rapier,’ objected Allen, ‘and a visgee, and a caliver, and that is enough for Englishmen against any yellow-livered Dons.’

‘But the rapier is broken, the visgee old and worn, and the caliver all a-rust,’ said Jack. ‘I tell you you are mad, and I will have no part with your madness. The general’s orders are straight, and I would not depart from them were we twice as many, and twice as well armed.’

But the men still murmured and continued to urge him to it, till I wondered to see how he could resist

them, and loved him more than ever for his loyalty to his brother's commands.

'Never mind, lads,' said Allen mockingly at last. 'We will go to the fort and wait till the general comes back. He knows how to show Dons what dirt they are under English feet, and he will make us amends when he hears how our voyage was spoilt, because our captain was afraid of a craft only three times his size.'

Poor Jack! That was more than he could endure. It touched him in his one weak point, which Allen knew well enough. He was a lion in courage, but yet not brave enough to bear calmly any suspicion of cowardice.

'What!' he roared. 'You dog! Dare you use me so? Then, by yea and nay, you shall have your will, and see who is afraid and who is not.'

'Oh, never mark him, Jack!' I said, wishing to dissuade him from this wild attempt. 'Look not round at every cur that barks! Who doubts your courage is an ass!'

'No, Jasper, hold your peace,' cried poor Jack, more furious than ever. 'Never shall they say to my brother that their voyage is lost by my cowardice. They shall run their heads into danger, but never shall they say mine was not there first. Give me the rapier. Allen, take you the visgee and stand by my side in the fore-part if you are a man. Robert shall take the caliver, and Mr. Festing steer. And now, lads, overboard with the planks or we shall never catch her.'

In a very short time the pinnacle was clear, Jack

was standing in the forepart with the broken rapier, and his pillow wrapped round his left hand for a warding gauntlet, for there was no buckler in the boat, and Allen stood by his side. We overhauled our chase very quickly, and were soon but a few boat-lengths from her. I could see she had taken measures to prevent our boarding, and was doubtless well prepared.

‘See, Jack,’ I cried, ‘she has close-fights all round her bulwarks; we shall never board.’

‘We shall board her or never another,’ said he, with set teeth. ‘It is too late to turn now. What I take in hand I carry through. Steady as she goes, and stand by to board!’

In another moment we fell aboard of her. I saw Jack and Allen leap up on her close-fights. Then suddenly she was alive with belching flame. There was a roar, a cloud of smoke, a flash of pikes, and in the midst two bodies fell heavily back into the pinnace.

‘Shove off for your lives,’ I cried, ‘before they grapple.’ For I could see the frigate was swarming with pikes and small shot.

Those in the forepart seized their oars, some thrusting away from our enemies’ side, while others swiped at the faces of those who were trying to grapple or stay our purpose with their long pikes and halberds. Amongst these I saw Jack rise painfully and work with a will. Once I saw a pike levelled straight at Allen as he too was shoving off, in spite of an awful wound in his head. I made sure he was gone, but Jack dashed

his oar into the pikeman's face and fell backwards fainting with the effort.

By good luck at that moment we fell free, and a few lusty strokes fetched us clear. With all our force we rowed out of danger of her small shot; but they neither saluted us again nor made anything of their triumph, believing, as I think, it was best not to tempt us to return.

'Tell Frank how it was, lad,' said Jack, as I laid him down in the stern all covered with blood, and he opened his eyes.

'Nay, lad,' said I, 'you shall tell him yourself.'

'No, never, Jasper,' murmured he; 'my time is come. God has judged me for disobeying Frank's words; he always knew best. But Allen maddened me. Poor fellow! he is sore hurt. See to him, Jasper. 'Tis a brave heart.'

'First I must see to you,' I said, 'and mend your hurt a bit.'

''Tis no good,' he said, more faintly still. 'Mine is past mending. I feel it. What will Frank say of me? Would my death had come any way but this! Yet they will not call me coward again, will they, Jasper?'

His voice grew weaker and weaker, and a deadly pallor overspread his face.

'Tell father how it was I disobeyed Frank,' he went on, with long spaces between the words. 'He will forgive me. He knows it always maddened me to be called coward. But what will Frank say? what will Frank say?'

Again he urged me to go to the others and see if I could not remedy the evil his disobedience had brought on the company. I found Allen at death's door, cursing himself with his last breath for what he had brought on his valiant captain. Two or three others were hurt, but not grievously ; and as soon as I had tended them a little I went again to Jack's side. I could see death written on his face, and gave him some wine to revive him.

'Tell Frank how I grieved for my folly,' he said, speaking with great difficulty. 'And tell Joe never to swerve a hairsbreadth from the course Frank marks. And ask him to forgive me. And, Jasper, say a prayer for me ; not for superstition, lad, but just for comfort's sake.'

I had not prayed since that terrible night at the inn, which now seemed 'so long ago and so far away. Yet I could not refuse. So I knelt down, and all the mariners did likewise, uncovering respectfully. I prayed, as well as I could recall it, the prayer I heard on the old preacher's lips at my father's funeral, and repeated the beautiful words of his text, which I remembered so well.

'Now sing a psalm,' said the dying man ; 'just for comfort's sake—for comfort's sake.'

So on that still and lonely tropic sea we raised with our rough voices a homely English hymn, to the deep diapason of the booming surf sounding outside the islands. As we ended he smiled, and I saw his lips moved. I leaned down to hear what he said.

‘Frank will forgive me,’ the low murmur said, ‘when you tell him how it was. He was always good to us, Frank was, and always knew best. He will understand. Frank always underst——’

So his murmur ceased; and that brave youth, my friend, passed peacefully away as the sun went down. And within an hour Allen’s soul followed his captain’s.

Next day we buried them both on the island, thinking much of the high hopes we had of our governor’s greatness had he lived, and deeply lamenting the cheerful, steadfast spirit that was gone from amongst us. As for the simple Cimaroons, they were beside themselves with grief, and would have performed strange idolatrous ceremonies about his grave had we suffered it, but the sailors would not let them go near, save once a day to cover it with fresh flowers. This was their only comfort, save a sure hope that, now his brother was killed, Frank would be no longer content with gold, but would want to ‘wash his elbows’ in Spanish blood.

CHAPTER XXI

WEARILY the weeks went by after John Drake's death. What with the miserable effect it had upon the whole company and the continual rains, it was all that Harry and I could do to keep the men in good heart. Indeed, our lives at that time were far from easy, not only in respect of our spirits, because of our grief, but also in respect of our bodies, because of the wet and cold, and, above all, the legions of a certain grievous insect, which the constant rain seemed to engender of the mud upon our islands.

We had suffered from them all along the coast, but never so grievously as here. The Spaniards call them 'mosquitoes.' They are insects of the bigness and similitude of reasonable gnats, but for ferocity, persistence, and trumpeting past anything we know in England. We often marvelled for what purpose they could have been made, unless it were to punish Spaniards. Yet this reason halts, for a mariner who had sailed in a ship of the Muscovy Company reported to us that he had felt and seen them as bad, or worse, in the country of the Samoits and Permians upon the Muscovy Sea.

Yet by constant work, in strengthening our fort, and

hunting with the Cimaroons on the Main, no less than by every pastime Harry could devise, we managed to keep in health till the general returned. It was towards the end of November that he came back, with a prize of some ninety tons, which, as well as his pinnaces, was laden with all manner of provisions, not forgetting several *botijos* of good Spanish wine.

Like ourselves he had suffered much from wet and cold, as well as from want of meat, for he had found the whole coast thoroughly alarmed and prepared for his coming. Yet had he taken not a few prizes, and, what pleased him best, ridden out a storm which lasted many days in the harbour of Carthage itself, in spite of all the Spaniards could do with horse, foot, ordnance, and treachery to drive him thence.

But all the joy with which we might have talked over these things was marred, because Jack was no longer there to take his part. Of Frank's and Joseph's grief over the loss of their brother I will not speak. Yet I know how deep it was, though they said but little. Frank seemed to care no longer to jest over what the prisoners had said about him, and when alone was very stern, though outwardly with the men he would be cheerful as ever.

It was all the harder to bear since we were now condemned more than ever to inaction. From what the general saw on his last-made voyage to Carthage, and the intelligences he had from the prisoners, he was resolved to keep close, that the Spaniards might think us entirely gone, until we could hear of the coming of

the Plate Fleet, when with better hope we could make our attempt by land against the *recuas* that came to meet it.

We were well able to lie still awhile, since our magazines were full, and there was no necessity for our putting to sea for intelligence, since the Cimaroons had spies out everywhere for the first tidings of the coming of the fleet.

Frank's efforts to keep the men in good heart were redoubled, since, now that the rains were beginning to abate, he knew the sun would increase in power and draw all kinds of noxious humours and exhalations from the sodden earth; against which danger he held there was nothing so medicinable as a cheerful spirit.

Till the end of the year things went well, though in spite of all we could do with daily worship, music, and sports, it was plain that crude and heavy humours were being engendered in us by the sudden change we underwent from cold to heat.

Our surgeon was ever urging Frank to permit him to rid the men of these humours by strong purgations, but he would not consent to it, rather serving out more wine to those who seemed most oppressed. So we passed Christmas indifferently well; but, our merry-making over, things went worse than ever, with constant quarrels and murmuring, which Frank bore with very patiently, knowing it was an infirmity of the flesh rather than the spirit.

At last some lay down and would not be persuaded

to any sport, and before the end of the day our surgeon pronounced ten of them to be sick of a calenture. Three days after half our company was down and several dead. In vain did Frank and the surgeon try every remedy they could devise. On the seventh day Joseph Drake was seized, to his brother's great grief.

For some days our general had been very earnest to have made discovery of this terrible disease by ripping open one of those who had died, and now in hope to save his brother he openly proclaimed his intention, but in spite of their sufferings the company murmured so loudly at this profanation of their dead comrades that he was compelled to forego his desire.

'They say I care not what indignity I set on them,' said Frank to me, when I told him what the men were saying, 'so long as I save my brother? Poor lads, they must be sorely sick in body and spirits to say that. They shall see yet how they are all brothers to me, and they shall have their way. Yet I would dearly love to make discovery of the strange matter. It is hard, very hard, to lose Joe as well as Jack.'

Yet so he did, and two days after Joseph Drake breathed his last in his brother's arms. I saw tears drop from Frank's eyes as he bent over the fair curly head that lay on his knee, watching the bright young life go fitfully out. Joe had spoken last of his unhappy mother, seeming to lament he had not been more kind to her, and this memory had touched Frank, who was himself sick, more keenly than he could bear.

So, as I say, he was weeping over his brother as he

died. When the last glimmer of life was gone he laid the fair head on the pillow, and, kneeling down, prayed to God very earnestly that his brother might be the last to die. Nearly all the company were gathered round kneeling very respectfully as the general prayed. When he made an end they all cried 'Amen,' and most tried in vain to keep back a tear when they saw how tenderly their general leaned down and kissed the calm young face of his dead brother.

All the time our rat-faced surgeon sat unmoved in the corner of the house where we were. He alone did not kneel, but sat with his case of knives on his knee, and never took his little round eyes off the general. He shifted uneasily when Frank stooped to give his farewell embrace to his brother, and looked more keenly than ever when he rose up to his feet with dry eyes and the old resolute look on his face.

'Now, my lads,' said he, 'you may go. It is over. I thank you all heartily for your prayers. Your duty is done, but mine and Master Surgeon's is only begun. You would not let me do it before, and so we have come to this pass; but, by God's help, this day we will make an end. You thought I used you hardly when I would have done this to one of your mates. So I stayed my hand, knowing how abominable it is to unlearned men. Yet now you shall not hinder me, for between me and my brother's body no one has a right to stand. Go now, and ere long you shall know whether I hold my brotherhood to my father's son higher than my brotherhood to you, my company.'

The rat-faced surgeon had opened his case, but the men still were loath to go, as though they would have stayed Frank from his purpose, and again the little black eyes looked keen and anxious at the captain.

‘Go, men!’ cried Frank in a sharp, biting voice. ‘It is I, Captain Drake, who bid you, and whom you know.’

Slowly then they left. More than one stopped at the door to look round at the surgeon rolling up his sleeves and shudder, till Frank’s set look sent them on their way. He beckoned me to stay ; and indeed I think he had need of some one to support him in his terrible resolution. It is a fearful thing to use a body as we were about to do, but what must it have been to Frank thus to desecrate the mortal part of that fair youth he loved so well !

It made me sick to see how eagerly the surgeon went to his work. As soon as we had stripped the corpse Frank drew from his pack a book he had often spoken to me about. It was *The Englishman’s Treasure, or the True Anatomy of Man’s Body*, by Master Thomas Vicary. This he held open in his hand, and signed to the surgeon to begin.

Over the terrible sight that followed let me draw the veil. To me it was as heroic a spectacle as ever Agamemnon presented at Aulis. It was a holy sacrifice by our general of his tenderest feelings. Yet when I think how detestable, inhuman, and sacrilegious in most men’s eyes is the dissection of bodies, how it has ever been banned by the Church, how there are many who would have it altogether prevented by law, and how

‘loathsome it is even in my eyes, who so well know its necessity, I hasten from the picture that fills my memory, since I have said enough for men to bear in mind this crowning act of Francis Drake’s heroical resolution. Everything he did before and afterwards I think called for less from his noble nature than that. Many high-sounding acts he achieved before his death, in the face of danger and the heat of battle, with a constancy that will make true English hearts beat higher for all time; yet nothing stamps hero on his memory, to my thinking, like what that January afternoon he steadfastly endured on that fever-stricken isle, in cold blood, unshaken, unflinching, and almost unmarked. It was the first experiment in anatomy that our captain made that voyage. I cannot wonder it was also the last.

Even the surgeon was more moved than he, and in order to purge the pestilent humours which he swore arose from the body and were the cause of the disease he took so strong a dose of his own compounding that he never spake again, nor did his boy, who also tasted the medicine, recover wholly till we reached England.

Frank, therefore, became surgeon himself, and whether from the knowledge he had gained by his terrible experiment on his brother, or whether by using different remedies, or none at all, I know not, but certain it is that from that time no more died, and those that were sick began rapidly to mend.

Still we had suffered heavy loss before it was all ended, and many were ‘for giving up our voyage, protesting it was useless to attempt to ‘make’ it with so

maimed a company. But Frank would not hear such counsel, and cheerfully encouraged them to endure a little longer.

Our joy then may be judged when on the last day of January some of the Cimaroons, who ever since our first meeting with them had been continually ranging up and down the country to gather news, reported of a certainty that the Plate Fleet had put into Nombre de Dios.

A pinnacle was at once despatched to the outermost island of the Cativaas to confirm this report, whereby our general hoped to test how far our allies were worthy of trust, since he knew that if it were as they said, the victuallers would be seen flocking to the ships with supplies.

Within a few days the pinnacle returned bringing the joyful confirmation we desired, and something more which we very little desired, namely, thirteen Spanish prisoners, and amongst them the *Scrivano* of Tolu and a black-eyed comely girl, his daughter. These had been taken on a frigate laden with victuals, which had been dealt with for the sake of getting certain news of the fleet.

Nothing could have embarrassed us more in the last preparations we had now to make for our land journey. To release the prisoners was impossible, since they would have straightway spread the news which it was our business to conceal. While to keep them was to have them in constant danger of being cruelly massacred by the Cimaroons.

Frank took every precaution that was possible. The prisoners were landed on 'Slaughter Island,' as we called it, since we had lost so many of our company there, so as to keep the Cimaroons from sight of them, and then speedily set on board our great Carthagena prize, which lay moored hard by the island.

Here they were all brought before our general to be questioned. He received them in such state as we could make upon the poop, and presently encouraged them to fear nothing, for they seemed very ill at ease as not knowing what treatment they should get at our hands. In the midst of his speaking I saw the girl draw a knife from her breast, and with the suddenness of a cat spring upon Frank. In truth I think he must have been very near his death had not I seized her hand, being prepared by what I had seen, and held her.

It was all I could do to keep her from him, for she writhed and struggled in a frenzy of passion and would not be pacified, till, much against our will, we were forced to bind her pretty hands behind her for the sake of peace, as though she had been a common mariner. Then she stood alone in the midst before Frank helpless, panting, and flushed, a passingly beautiful picture. Her luxuriant black hair was loosened in her struggles and fell all about her face, and her large dark eyes were flashing defiance at Frank as she drew herself up proudly before him, looking like some young tigress fresh caught from the forest in the plenitude of her wild youth and beauty.

‘Well, my beauty,’ says Frank good-humouredly, ‘this is strange woman’s work ! Why will you force on us such discourtesy as to fit you with such rude bracelets. Your pretty white arms were meant for other work than this.’

‘I know that,’ she answered scornfully; ‘but when men turn women, women must do men’s work. You—you are men, and know not what it is for a woman to be amongst such curs as these, who cower to be kicked at the very sight of an Englishman, and let you heretic Lutheran dogs plunder good Catholics as you will and then whine to the Blessed Virgin to help their cowardice. Ah, if we had a few hearts like yours and mine then you should see !’

‘God forbid,’ says Frank, ‘that we meet many men like you, else surely will our voyage take more making than we bargained for.’

‘Ah, you are a man,’ she said, ‘and you know. I am glad I did not kill you now, though. I vowed the first time I met him to attempt with my bodkin the life of the Dragon Francisco.’

‘Dragon Francisco is good,’ laughed Frank. ‘Were you twice as wild you should have your bracelets off for that ! Loose her, Jasper ; she will be quiet now.’

‘Ah,’ she said again, as I undid her bonds, ‘you are a man. It is long since I felt a man’s hand.’ With that she threw herself at the captain’s feet, and, taking his rough hand in hers, kissed it ardently. Then without a word she walked away from where we sat, and quietly fell to twisting up the great masses of black

hair that clung about her, which was a wonder to us all.

Having got the intelligence we required from the prisoners, it remained but to set a guard over them, both to prevent their escape and to keep an eye on the Cimaroons. I think Mr. Oxenham would have very gladly undertaken this labour for the sake of those same lustrous dark eyes ; but Frank would not have it so, and appointed me to it, bidding me treat the prisoners with all courtesy so far as I could, having regard to their safe-keeping.

I did not much relish my wardship of the wild girl, though I think I was as much taken with her beauty and spirit as any of us. For Frank would not have her put under constraint, though he suffered me to keep the rest below hatches when night came on. So I allotted her the best place in the poop, and bade her good-night.

As the night wore on my anxiety only increased, and, being unable to sleep, I went to walk on deck. It was a glorious tropic night, with the moon flooding the dark forests and studded islands and the slumbering sea with a brilliancy we do not know in the Old World. It was so beautiful that I bade the look-out man go to rest, saying I did not wish to sleep and would keep his watch for him. He seemed very surprised, but thanked me civilly and went below.

As I watched alone on deck the Spanish girl kept constantly in my thoughts. Whatever way I tried to think my mind always came back to her, and her white

skin and beautiful eyes, so flashing in anger, so soft in peace. I began to dread she would be the cause of contentions amongst us, and to long for the time when we should be well away on our land journey.

I was sitting on the forecastle, and had been there perhaps for the space of half an hour, when, just as the *Señorita* was most vividly in my thoughts, I saw the poop door stealthily open and a strange figure appear. I knew in a moment who it was, in spite of her being so changed. It was plainly the Spanish girl, looking more beautiful than ever in the dress she had adopted. It was nothing more than the ordinary apparel which the Spanish mariners use in those seas, consisting of loose striped drawers reaching just above the knee, and an easy-fitting sleeveless shirt of white material, which she had girt tightly about her waist with a red scarf.

Too amazed to act, I could only watch her ripe young figure, which her dress set off to its full beauty, creeping warily forward towards me. Very quietly I sunk lower into the shadow of the bulwarks to watch what she would do.

Every now and again she looked round in some new and graceful posture to see if she were watched. At last she reached the foremast, to which was fixed the mutilated image of the Virgin and Child, and there she fell upon her knees and began to pray in a low earnest voice that I could just hear.

‘Holy Mother of God,’ she said, ‘for the last time I beseech thine aid to support me across the dark waters, to ~~guide~~ me through the forest, to bring me

safely to Nombre de Dios, that thy loving worshippers may come at my word and destroy the heretics that would plunder the treasure which his most Catholic Majesty would devote to thy service, saving only, if it be not sin, Captain Francisco Draque, whom it were a pity to kill, and the sad-faced man who has warded me so courteously, and who, I think, is half in love with me.'

Then she rose and walked with desperate quickness towards the side, but ere she had gone three steps I had leaped down into the waist, and she was struggling frantically in my arms. I was resolved to stay her from the wild purpose her brave spirit was bent on. As she writhed in my grasp I remember being rather afraid that she should fall into the hands of the Cima-rooms than that we should be betrayed to the Spaniards.

Like an eel she strove to get free, her dress giving her perfect freedom to strain every effort. So tenderly did I feel towards her for the sake of her heroic attempt that I was only thoughtful how not to hurt her, but it was misplaced kindness, for suddenly she slipped from my loosened grasp. In a moment she was at the bulwarks, poising herself for a spring into the water, when suddenly she gave a low cry of horror and sprang back into my arms as I rushed to her side.

In an extremity of abject terror, to which her resolution was suddenly changed, she clung about me, trembling from head to foot.

'Save me, Señor, save me!' she gasped, as she sank down clasping my knees wildly. '~~Oh, no, no~~ Sancta

Maria! see what is coming,—O God, what will they do to me! I cannot bear it. Save me, Señor, save me!’

So distractedly did she cling to me that I was obliged to lift her in my arms before I could get to the side to see what had frightened her, and then I could not wonder how her courage had melted, for I saw a sight that made my blood run cold.

Close to the ship and moving swiftly towards her swam over half a score of black woolly heads. The ghostly moonlight glittered white on the long wake that stretched behind each, and on their rolling eyes, and, worst of all, on a grizzly knife which each held in his grinning teeth. Like some hellish monsters engendered in the foul womb of the sea they came on with lusty strokes, silent, sure, and determined.

There was no time to fetch my caliver or wake the guard had I been willing to do so. But this was far from my wish; for I feared, had they known the negroes’ purpose and seen the terror of their pretty prisoner, they would have dealt more hardly with our allies than the general would have liked. Moreover, to be plain, I had a still stronger reason for what I did; for I could not bear to think that those rough men should see my beautiful captive so scantily yet withal so prettily clad as she was. So, drawing my rapier, I sprang to the gangway, for which they were making.

‘Back, back!’ I cried, as low as I could for them to hear. ‘The first man that tries to board has my blade through him.’

That, I thought, dismayed them, for each as he swam up stopped without attempting to board, which they might easily have done; for the ship, being full of victuals, was very low in the water, and, moreover, two chains hung down the side by the gangway. I was in no little doubt how I could deal with them should they make any attempt, for I feared that my terrified Señorita would much hamper my movements, since she had followed me to the gangway. Therefore, to further dissuade them, I fell to showing them how ill the general would take what they did, seeing the prisoners were his.

Even as I spoke I was much encouraged to feel the Señorita's arm steal round me and draw from its sheath the strong sailor's knife I always wore. I knew then the brave girl had recovered her spirit. I could not refrain from pressing the little hand as it closed round the hilt of the knife, to let her know how I marked her courage.

My speech had small effect on the Cimaroons; for though they still held off, yet they seemed not to note my words, but only to glare horribly at the girl by my side. Wondering what next to do, I was all at once aware that most of them had disappeared. There was something so unearthly and magical in this sudden vanishing that my heart misgave me. While I could see my foes I did not fear but that I could deal with them as I wished; but now I was encompassed by unseen dangers, and in that ghostly moonlight, I say plainly, I was afraid.

Nothing would have been more to my mind than to cry aloud and wake the sailors. Yet I set my teeth hard and gripped anew Harry's rapier. I felt he would have done as I hoped for courage to do, and I clung to my former resolution. Yet I saw it was useless to wait where I was, so, taking the Señorita's hand, I led her towards the poop. Half-way there she looked back, started, and clutched my arm.

'Look, Señor, look,' she whispered, 'look at the fore-castle.'

I turned and saw the evil sight I dreaded. Black against the moonlit sky the wet, shining figure of a Cima-roon was climbing over the bulwarks where our head-fast ran out. I knew directly they must have dived to the cable and climbed up by it. In another minute they would all be aboard.

Then I knew there was but one thing to do, and ran quickly under the poop-gallery with the Señorita.

'Go in, Señorita,' said I, as soon as we reached the door. 'You must leave me to deal with these alone.'

'No, Señor,' she answered, 'I will not leave. I am not afraid now. It was only for a moment. I will stay and fight them with you.'

'There is no need,' said I; 'I am going to rouse the mariners.'

Indeed, it was time. One after another I could see the black forms climb over the bulwarks, dripping and gleaming in the moonlight, and each with his bright knife. A hideous head, too, was glaring over the gangway, though waiting for the rest. Still the

Señorita would not go, but rather stepped out into the moonlight to be farther from the door, which I held open.

‘No! I will wait with you,’ she said resolutely. ‘Why should I not wait and fight beside the sailors when they come?’

‘Because, Señorita,’ said I, growing desperate as I saw the wet, shining forms creeping athwart the forecastle, ‘because they are rough men, and I would not have them see you as you are.’

A crimson flush overspread her beautiful face. With wide astonished eyes and parted lips she met my gaze for a moment.

‘Ah!’ she cried then, just as she had to Frank, ‘you are a man!’ Dropping the knife as she spoke, she sprang towards me, and before I was aware what she did she had taken my face between her soft little hands and kissed me on the lips. Then she was gone; and even as that fair vision passed I saw black forms dropping from the forecastle into the waist. Loudly then I shouted to my company, and ere the Cimaroons had advanced many paces one of the mariners came running up to me, and then another, and another, blowing up their matches.

That was enough for the Cimaroons, who we afterwards found had no heart to stand before gunpowder. One of them uttered a loud cry, and then with one accord they all leaped into the sea. Lustily they made for the shore, and I had much ado to prevent my small-shot men and archers hastening their swimming, but at last I prevailed.

After that I set a double watch, but we were no more disturbed that night. Next day I reported these things to the general, who so dealt with the Cimaroons, and took such order for a guard over the prisoners, that the Spaniards were no more molested till we departed on our land journey, though the negroes ceased not to urge him by every device they could think of to permit them to have at least a few to murder, or better than naught, the girl alone.

As for me, I craved to be relieved of my charge, feeling that after what had passed it would be better for us both if the captive had another warder; but Frank only laughed, and said he could trust no one, not even himself, with that lump of Eve's flesh, unless it were a sober scholar like myself. With that answer, whereby he showed less knowledge of men than ordinary, I had to be content, and bear myself as soberly and scholarly towards my prisoner as I could make shift to do till the time came for our departure.

CHAPTER XXII

A FORTNIGHT later, in a fair clearing on the summit of those forest-clad hills which separate the Atlantic Ocean from the South Sea knelt eighteen sunburnt, way-worn Englishmen. In their midst rose a giant-tree that reared its head high above all the dense growth around it. In its rugged bark steps had been cut that led upwards to a sort of bower high amidst the massive branches, which might have served as a watch-house to the little settlement that was about the glade.

For all around where those gaunt men knelt were strong houses built in the manner of the Cimaroons, some thirty of whom knelt reverently outward of the Englishmen listening to the prayer which the thick-set, curly-bearded man in the centre offered up so earnestly.

Earnestly, too, those seventeen others listened, as they knelt in the heart of the Spanish Main, with as stout an air of triumph on their youthful faces as though it were all their own. And no wonder it was so. For each man there had but just ascended to that silvan watch-tower, and there had seen to the northward the ocean whence he had come, and over against it, beyond the rolling slope of gorgeous tropic forest, that

silent sea of mystery on which no Englishman had sailed stretched at his feet, as though waiting peacefully for him to come and take possession.

To our fancies, heated with the hundred tales we had heard of the inexhaustible treasure which came from that new-found sea whereof the wisest of the ancients were ignorant, it seemed to glitter like a boundless, unfathomable caldron of molten silver. From this, our first sight of it, it seemed but a little step with our elated spirits to enter and possess it; and so it was with uplifted hearts and throbbing pulse that, resting on our weapons, we kneeled and listened to Frank Drake's prayer.

'O Almighty God,' he said, 'who has granted us of Thy great goodness that we should set our eyes at last on that great sea which for all the ages till now no man knew, but only Thou, and which, though Thou hadst kept it hidden as an inheritance for all mankind who served Thee aright, the Bishop of Rome has impiously taken upon himself to give to an idolatrous king and people: Grant to me now out of the plenty of Thy power and bounty life and leave to sail once, if only once, in an English ship in that sea. So shall I, thy servant, and such of those others here to whom Thou wilt vouchsafe the same, enter thereon to the advancement to Thy glory, and the confusion of the lewd priest and potentate who has usurped and abused the vineyard which Thou hadst prepared for Thy people.'

So he ceased, and a deep 'Amen' mingled with the rustle of the breeze amongst the vines and canes. Then

up 'sprang Mr. John Oxenham, and held on high his right hand.

'Hearkye, lads,' he cried, very excited, 'you have heard the captain's prayer, and know his resolution. Now bear witness that by yea and nay I protest, as I am a gentleman, that, unless he beat me from his company, I will follow him, by God's grace, into that sea.'

So one after another we all protested to the like intent, very earnest and eager for that time to come; and yet, resolute as we all were, how few ever made good our resolve, and notably Mr. Oxenham! Had he but been content to follow Frank, instead of faithlessly trying to be before him, who knows but he too might have died a knight with a golden collar, and not, as he did, like a felon with a necklet of Spanish hemp! But let that pass, for who knows better than I how hard it may be to keep a resolution which in the making seemed so easy? Such falling away we must openly condemn, for the sake of the state and reverence for the laws; yet no wise man will inwardly hasten to loathe sin, since he is well aware that until he has made trial he cannot tell how small a shock of temptation will lay his own honour in ruins.

And surely the sight of that golden sea, whereof no man knew the bounds, was enough to turn any man's head. None of us were in haste to leave that glorious sight, feeling as though we could never gaze our fill. To us, the first of Englishmen, was unfolded the portentous secret which the Spaniards had

kept so well. That night, then, we lay there to dream over the boundless visions to which our discovery gave birth.

On the morrow, refreshed with our rest, and feeling each one of us a new man in the presence of that new ocean, we began our perilous descent towards Panama. And perilous indeed it was, though none of us now could think of danger or anything but the golden sea.

We were, as I have said, but eighteen Englishmen. This little band was all we could muster for our attempt. Eight and twenty of our company were lying dead in graves already half hidden in brakes. Well-nigh half the rest were sick; and when these were set aside with a sufficiency of whole men to tend them, and above all to protect our ships and prisoners, eighteen were all we could spare.

I had been appointed one of the number, seeing that I was still whole; yet it must be said I was hard put to it to go. For my prisoner coaxed me so prettily to stay and protect her, and pouted so sweetly with her full red lips when I would not be moved, that I more than once came near to yielding, and was not a little glad that we marched as soon as we did.

Besides our eighteen we had with us thirty Cima-rooms, who lightened the labour of our march not only by their ready bearing of our burdens, which they would not suffer us to touch, but also by their cheerful spirits. They seemed never to weary, and were ever laughing and singing, even when the way was steepest and the brush most dense. They seemed, now that

they were away from the Spaniards and we came to know them better, an altogether docile, childlike people, whom one could but love, for all their hidden fierceness, as one would a staunch and faithful hound.

Pedro, their chief, who best knew the danger of our enterprise, had put it hard to the general that he should tarry at a certain town of theirs till a greater force of Cimaroons could be gathered. But this Frank would not hearken to. 'No, Pedro,' said he; 'the time speeds for "making" my voyage, and since I have enough I would not delay an hour though I might have twenty times as many.' A resolute answer which rejoiced and gave heart to us all.

So on the morrow of our discovery of the South Sea we began our descent as we were towards Panama. It was our general's purpose to waylay a *recua* as close as possible to Panama, where the Spaniards would least look for us, in case they had any wind of our still being on the coast. To this end we had made our toilsome march, going a good way about that we might not be descried, and so come down secretly upon the road which led from Panama to Venta Cruz, where, as I have said, the gold was embarked in frigates to be carried down the Rio Chagres to Nombre de Dios. We were the more moved to this course because of our uncertainty whether the *recuas* went as yet all the way by land to Nombre de Dios. As we were now it mattered little; for by thus striking boldly across the Main we could deal with them before they reached the river, and thus save them the pain of ~~disappointing~~ us.

Very warily now we pursued our painful way through the matted forest, in the order which Pedro besought us to adopt. First went, about a mile ahead of us, four Cimaroons, who best knew those trackless solitudes. For not a sign of a way was there, and even had there been one it would have been overgrown by the luxuriant brakes as fast as it was made. We had nothing further to direct us than the broken branches by which our guides marked the way we were to follow. How they could know their road amidst those wellnigh impenetrable woods, where they could not even see the sky above their heads, was more than I could tell. Mr. Oxenham said it was a special instinct which God had given them that they might the better be revenged upon the Spaniards who had so foully ill-treated them. How this may be I cannot say, but I know that Frank and most of the company said openly it was nothing short of a miracle, by which God showed His great love and tenderness towards us. * For it is certain that without the aid of these poor folk we could never even have attempted the Spaniards by land.

Our general was very earnest to show his gratitude for this mercy by burdening himself with care for their souls. For when he found that they seemed to have no religion, save a sort of idolatrous and superstitious reverence for the Cross, he would not rest till by continual urging them at our halts he brought them to lay it aside and learn in its stead the Lord's Prayer and certain plain doctrines as he thought sufficient for their low understanding.

Great as was the skill of our guides in leading, it was little exceeding our vanguard's diligence in clearing the way. For in the front of our main body marched twelve Cimaroons, who with loving care made the way as easy as might be for us and their two chiefs, who were in company with us. Rearwards of all were twelve negroes more, bearing our burdens and watching against any danger that might threaten from the rear.

So we marched stealthily through that eternal wilderness of brake, and vine, and flower, and massive over-shadowing trees hour after hour, in perfect silence, save for the scolding of the frightened parrots overhead and the strident screaming of the fearless guans. To me that march gave a pleasure and present sense of strong life that I had never known before ; nor did my content end there. For Harry felt the influence as strongly as I, and so there was bred between us one more piece of sympathy, which gave me yet further hope that I might win his love again. It seemed to bring back our boyhood, and almost in his old boyish way he came that night and sat beside me.

'Is this not glorious work?' said he, as he stretched his weary limbs upon the flowers.

'I could almost wish it would never end,' I answered. 'It lifts a man out of himself like nothing else I know.'

'That is it,' he mused. 'Indeed, I think there is nothing which will keep a man so continually excited as silently stalking through a boundless forest like this, where a white man's foot has never trod before. As you pick your way at each step, that no stick may ~~break~~ or

stone roll ; as cautiously you press through the boughs, that none may break or fly back noisily ; as you strain your ear for the whispered order that is passed from your comrade, and peer ever forwards towards where the danger lies, then you know best the pure joy of living, the joy of the tiger leaping on his prey, the joy of the falcon stooping at his quarry.'

'Well said ! well said !' I cried, catching his enthusiasm. 'Even so I now at last can say, "I live and know my life. Now live I with the life of my father Adam, the son of God." Now know I that fable for a true allegory, and feel I have dominion over the beast of the field and the fowls of the air, which is called the inheritance of Adam.'

'Truly what greater joy was his than we have now !' said Harry. 'The wild pigs and deer and pheasants are our meat, the bubbling brooks our wine-cups, the leafy boughs our roof, the flowers our beds. His inheritance is ours ! 'Slight, it is a time to tempt a man to throw aside the fetters of his clothes and the burden of his arms, and rise up with nought but a spear as symbol of dominion, and live to his life's end a lord of beasts.'

'It is you, Harry,' said I, 'whom I must thank that I too can know this intense joy. It was your father's bringing-up of me that taught me to love the out-of-doors.'

'Well, it is mock-modesty,' he answered, 'to say he knew not how to make a man. Indeed, I think Machiavelli did not much err when he praised the education of Achilles, for whom Chiron chose a master

half-man, half-beast, that he might be acquainted with both, seeing that without the qualities of one the other will be of little duration. Such teachers we cannot come by now, yet we can make shift with one who forgets not that man is half a beast.'

Such talk we had many times afterwards ; and I call it a fortunate thing that our march drew to an end before we had quite run wild. On the second day after leaving the spot where we had viewed the South Sea we came out of the forests to a pleasant champaign country, overgrown with mighty grass, so rank that, as Pedro told us, the Spaniards had to burn it thrice a year, lest it grow so tall that the oxen cannot reach to feed on it ; which will seem a wonder to those who know not the Western Wonderland, but it is none the less plain truth.

Three days we passed through this marvel, suffering grievously from the heat after the cool shadows of the forest, yet being cheered many times by getting glimpses of Panama whenever we passed over the rolling hills that fell in our path. On the fourth day, being the 14th of February, we had for our valentine the blue roadstead of Panama, with its burden of gold ships riding upon it.

It was a sight to set every heart there beating faster, notwithstanding the many dangers and excitements through which we had passed since we heard the farewell guns from Plymouth platform. Indeed, it was now that our great peril began ; for by hook or crook we had to reach undescried a great grove which lay apart in the

midst of the champaign lands, about a league from the town.

Our danger of discovery, which would mar all, was now very great ; for the Cimaroons told us it was the custom of the ladies in Panama to send out fowlers in search of a certain delicate bird of which they were very fond. Should we fall in with but one of these men, which would be very easy in the tall grass, the alarm would be at once given, and our chance of gold gone—ay, and perhaps our lives with it.

Frank therefore bade us break up our order, and, falling into small parties, grope our way as silently and stealthily as possible towards our goal. It was weary work, and anxious. The sun was blazing down upon us with intolerable power. Every few minutes we had to stop and listen.

After going thus for a good space with infinite toil we struck a river bed, which was almost dry. This, to our great relief, the Cimaroons said we could follow safely, since it led straight to the grove. So in the end, by picking our way over the stones like cats, we came undescried to our hiding-place about three in the afternoon, and then disposed ourselves to rest, wellnigh exhausted.

There was now nothing to do but lie there still as mice till the night fell ; for the *recuas* do not travel by day between Panama and Venta Cruz, because the way lies wholly across the champaign country, where there is no shelter from the scorching fire of the sun. Moreover it was our captain's purpose, as soon as evening drew near, to send a negro in disguise into Panama to

discover whether any *recuas* were to be laden that night, and at what hour they were to start.

As I lay with the rest, half-asleep after my weary march, Frank came to me and asked if I were too tired for half an hour's more work.

'Not if you want it of me,' said I.

'Well then,' says he, 'come with me to the edge of the grove, whence Pedro says we can descry Panama.'

'But to what end?' I asked. 'We shall run great risk of discovery.'

'Not if we are careful,' says he; 'and it is worth the risk.'

'Why, what good will our intelligence be?' I asked, not wishing him to expose himself.

'Not much now,' he answered, 'but, by God's help, some day I will serve Panama as I served Nombre de Dios. If God grants my prayer for life and leave, and we sail that sea, yonder harbour is where we must strike, if we get not our fill elsewhere; and now I have opportunity of learning how the town lies, I will not throw it away. It is thus I have sped so far, and thus I mean to continue. For I hold it not enough for a man to pray earnestly; he must show by fearless, ungrudging endeavour that he is in earnest, and leave nothing undone which may speed the granting of his prayer. God could do all this and more without my help, that I know well; but yet I think He loves best to help men who are ready to show they are in earnest in seeking His help.'

So together we went and lay down ~~where~~ where we could

see the fair city, lying some little way from the harbour on either side of a goodly broad street that led northwards from the sea right through the houses. All was very still, because of the great heat that still prevailed. Yet we could see the convent nestling in its garden of palms, the tall spire of the church, the high bare walls of the King's Treasure-House, as big and strong as that at Nombre de Dios. And beyond all slumbered the gold ships in the roadstead.

'A fair place! a goodly place!' said Frank in a whisper. 'Too fair and goodly for those that possess it. It should be ours, Jasper, and our Queen's; and so it shall be, at least for as long as its plundering will take, if I can come into that roadstead with but two stout well-manned ships. We shall see, we shall see. Let us come away. It is in the Lord's hands to deal with as He wills.'

On our return to the strength we found the Cimaroons busy dressing our espial in the costume which the servants in Panama were accustomed to wear. He was a merry, shrewd fellow, who had served a master in the city formerly, and he bade us not to doubt that he would soon be back with all the intelligence we wanted.

After his going was another space of anxious waiting, during which we refreshed ourselves with such victuals as we had with us. To every man was given a little *agua vitæ* for his comfort. I was surprised to see Sergeant Culverin drinking, as I thought a little too freely, from a private store he had. I went to him, and he respectfully offered me some.

'No, Sergeant,' said I; 'if there is danger before us I would rather keep my head cool.'

'As you will, sir,' he said. 'It may be well enough for a young man, but with an old soldier it is different.'

'Then has not an old soldier as much need of a cool head as a young one?' I asked.

'Yes, perhaps,' he answered; 'but a cool head is little use if your heart is cool too.'

'Why, Sergeant,' said I, very surprised, 'your heart at least will not be faint when a fight is ahead.'

'No, sir,' said he gravely, 'no man shall say that; and yet I like to go about with it that it shall not faint, and therefore I discipline it with a sufficiency of *aqua vitae*.'

'Well, Sergeant,' said I, still very puzzled at the signs of timidity on the part of the grim old soldier, 'you are the last I should have suspected of needing so base a crutch for his courage.'

'Maybe my courage halts,' he answered sadly, 'maybe it does not. Once I never gave a thought to danger, but when a man has served much he knows. I do not think I have less courage than any man here, but I know what war is better than they. As you shall see more of war, sir, you shall see less of its glory and more of its horror. That is why I wished to come to England; and to be plain with you, I should never have run my head into this wild venture of Captain Drake's had it not been that my poor master—— but I crave your honour's pardon, I prattle impertinently.'

'No matter, Sergeant,' said I; 'it is I who should

crave your pardon. But tell me, do you think our danger so very great ?

‘Not perhaps if we succeed,’ answered the Sergeant ; ‘but if we fail, where shall we retreat ?’

‘But we must not think of that,’ said I.

‘A young soldier need not,’ said he sadly ; ‘but alas ! an old soldier cannot choose but think of it, unless——’

‘Unless what, Sergeant ?’ I asked.

‘Unless, sir,’ said he, grimly smiling, ‘in the stead of the ardent spirit of youth, which in you burns up such doubt, a man may come by a sufficiency of this most courageous *agua ardiente*.’

With that I left him, revolving much in my mind whether he or I were the braver man.

It was not long before our espial came back. We gathered eagerly round him for his news, which as eagerly he gave, seeing he was so full of it that he was like to burst had he not got this relief as soon as he did. And no wonder, for he told us he had found the Plaza full of mules, which men were fitting with packs. On questioning these he found that two great *recuas*, with a little silver and much victuals, were about to start for the fleet that night ; but what was better, and what caused his eagerness, was that, besides these, there was preparing to precede them a *recua* for no less a man than the Treasurer of Lima himself, who, being bent on returning to Spain by the first *adviso* that sailed, was starting that very night for Nombre de Dios with all his servants and his daughter, together with one mule load of jewels and eight of gold !

CHAPTER XXIII

It was midnight. Silence and darkness had fallen on that grass-bound highway that joined the oceans. Not a breath stirred the tall herbage. All was still as death, save for the distant mingled voices of the tropic night. Yet on either side the way, some two leagues short of Venta Cruz, that reedy pasture might have been seen to nod from time to time with a strange unaccustomed motion.

Save that, there was nothing to show a traveller that the sea of grass, through which his way led him, held stranger fish than all the rest of the wide expanse on either hand. Yet so it was. Strange fish, both black and white, lay there as still as serpents.

For thither had our captain led us as the most fitting spot for our venture, being, as Pedro showed, the farthest from Spanish relief and most convenient for our retreat with the plunder. So there I lay at Frank's side, and about me half our band, cutting strange figures. For Frank had made us put on our shirts over our other clothes, so that we might know friend from foe in the coming struggle.

Farther on, upon the other side of the way, was Mr.

Oxenham, with Harry and the rest, so placed that he might stop the head of the Treasurer's *recua* while we dealt with the tail. By this order, too, we might use our bows without fear of hurting our friends.

Between Frank and me lay a Spanish soldier fast bound. Our two Cimaroon guides had captured him on our march from the grove where we had lain hid all the afternoon. From him we had gathered intelligence which confirmed all that our espial had told us. Before this Frank had been loath to believe our good luck, thinking so strange a chance savoured of a trap to undo us. But this soldier, as soon as he learned who our captain was, was so overjoyed at knowing he would be softly dealt with that he gave us full knowledge of how to proceed, which he was the better able to do seeing that he himself was one of those hired to guard the Treasurer. All this, he swore, was honest truth, as he was a gentleman soldier. He seemed to wish nothing so much as our success, which we better could understand when he craved in return for his intelligence that our captain would not only save him from the Cimaroons, but also deal with him as he had with others in like place, giving him sufficient of the plunder to keep him and his mistress. He courteously promised in addition to make our names famous throughout all Spain and the Indies if we did this; but I think Frank was not very earnest to have his trumpet blown by such false lips. And I noted that as we lay there he had his dagger ready to curb any desire our prisoner might have to alarm his master when he approached.

It seemed hours that we lay there in the dim starlight. The tall grass about us hid everything from us but the white shirts of our comrades. We heard nothing but the drawing of our own breath, the beating of our own hearts, howsoever hard we strained our ears for a sound of the *recuas*. In truth, it could not have been past an hour before a puff of wind from the northward stirred the grass above us, and with it came the distant tinkle of bells.

It was but a *recua* from Venta Cruz, we knew, all of which we had resolved to let pass as only carrying merchandise for the city and Peru. Yet it made my heart beat faster for a while, till the breeze died again; and even as it ceased came another tinkle from the direction of the city. Every man moved to listen better, making the grass rustle, and Frank held up his hand to quiet them. The tinkling died away again as the *recua* passed down to some hollow, where the sound of its bells was drowned to us.

Night is day on this the most notable highway in the world, as I have shown, and great and rich is the traffic either way in the cool hours between sunset and dawn, when the Plate Fleet is lying in Nombre de Dios, and all the Spanish Main is stirring with the life, and hopes, and fears it brings.

It was natural, then, to hear on the round stones with which years ago Pizarro had paved the way the clatter of a horse's feet coming up from Venta Cruz, and mingling with the rise and fall of the distant tinkling. As the sound drew near, Pedro, who had been lying with

his head pressed against the ground, crawled towards us like a snake.

‘It is a *cabalero*,’ whispered he.

‘How do you know that?’ says Frank.

‘I can hear he has a page-boy running at his stirrup,’ answered the Cimaroon, whose ears seemed to turn to eyes in the dark. ‘It is easy to hear on the hard road. Listen!’

‘Well, whatever he be, let him pass,’ said Frank, for so we had determined. Yet very gladly, I think, would Pedro have made a dash at the gentleman’s throat.

On came the horse at a gentle trot till, when he came about opposite Mr. Oxenham’s party, we heard a plunging, as though he had taken fright at something, and immediately after he dashed past us at a false gallop on the way to the city.

‘Why has he changed his pace?’ said Frank quickly.

‘For no reason that I can tell,’ said Pedro, ‘unless the others showed themselves.’

‘They can never have been so mad,’ said Frank. ‘And yet I think he must have seen them. Did the page come by us?’

‘No,’ answered Pedro.

‘Did he go back?’ asked Frank.

‘I could not hear,’ said the Cimaroon.

‘Surely they must have shown themselves,’ said Frank. ‘Yet there is nothing for it but to lie still and wait.’

I thought of Sergeant Culverin and his *agua ardiente*, but held my peace. Silently we lay again listening

breathlessly to the sound of the galloping horse dying away in the distance towards Panama, and the growing clamour of the bells on either hand, not knowing how far we were descried, and being wholly unable to find out. Had the horseman seen anything, and would he warn the *recuas* of their danger? As we listened the full jangling of the mule-bells ceased and gave place to a fitful tinkle. It was now the sound of mules at a standstill, which shook themselves or tried to lick the places where the flies had galled them. Faint cries of impatient men mingled with the broken sound, and at last we could not doubt but that they had stopped. Frank and Pedro looked at each other blankly.

‘They have surely been warned,’ said Pedro.

‘Still we must wait,’ said Frank, with his stern look settling hard on his resolute face. ‘It is in God’s hand. Peradventure the gold was well gotten by this Treasurer, and it is not His will that we should take it from him.’

With this cold comfort we had to content ourselves and listen again. Very soon the bells towards Venta Cruz pealed full again, and in a few minutes Pedro knew they were returning. Our wits were now wholly bent towards the city. Would they come on and trust to the Treasurer’s guard? That was all we could ask ourselves. The answer came before many minutes were past.

Again the full jangle broke the stillness. They had moved again. As loud as ever it sounded, and our hopes beat high, but only for a short space. Lower and lower sank the sound, till we could hardly hear it. Pedro whispered to Frank, who held up his hand to calm

some who had half risen, hoping for an order to pursue.

It was plain they were fast losing patience, when suddenly the faint tinkling waxed again, till it burst out with a full-toned peal not half a mile from us. Then I knew it was but a deep hollow in the road that had kept the sound from us. Louder and louder it grew, till we could hear each bell sweet and distinct, for the Spaniards love to have them strong and full-toned for comfort on their long and dreary marches.

I saw Frank's whistle, on which he always gave us the signal to attack, glisten in the starlight as he pulled it out. I drew my rapier silently. Now we could hear the men cursing their mules and beating them, as though they were in hot haste. Now they were abreast of us. Still we stirred not. Mule after mule we could hear go by, almost deafening us with the clang of their bells, though not a hair could we see in our dark lair. A whole train so passed, and then came another. • Now was our time. The whistle gleamed at Frank's lips. I gripped my hilt hard. Shrilly went up the signal, clear above the jangling bells.

In a moment we were on our feet, rushing through the grass breast high on two full trains of mules. Whether there were soldiers there we could not tell, yet no armour could I descry. There was no time to think. Already I heard Mr. Oxenham's voice shouting to the leading carriers to stop, and we were amongst them.

Every one knocked over or seized the man in front of him. I rushed with Frank to the rear to stay any

man escaping. We knew our other company had stopped the front *recua*, for the mules all began lying down, as is their wont when they are halted.

They were soon all stretched peacefully in the way, and it was all over. Not a sign of resistance was there. We hardly knew what to make of it. There was not a Spaniard in all the train, much less a Treasurer and his daughter.

‘Hold that false Spaniard fast, Jasper,’ cried Frank. ‘If he has deceived us, as I fear he has, he shall rue the day.’

So I clung to my charge, the prisoner we had brought along with us, while the rest made discovery of our capture. Bale after bale they cut, but no treasure was to be found. Nothing was in them but victuals for the fleet. Frank sent for the chief carrier to learn where the gold was, as we had little time to spare, and then we knew the worst.

‘Ah, most worthy *cabalero*,’ said the chief carrier, who seemed a very tall, sensible fellow, ‘they have played you a trick, for which none is to blame but yourself.’

‘But was not the Treasurer of Lima to pass first to-night?’ asked Frank impatiently.

‘Since you know that I will tell you all,’ answered the man. ‘Sure enough he was to come with all his gold and family and jewels, but half-way hither a *cabalero* met us in hot haste, saying he had seen something alive, half white, half black, rolling in the grass, and he feared there was danger. So he urged his

Excellency to turn back and send on the victual *recuās* to try and spring the trap, if there was one. We have done it, and crave indulgence, since it was but our orders, noble captain.'

I saw Frank's face darken with anger in the flare of the torches we had now kindled. He turned quickly from the muleteer to us who stood by.

'Mr. Oxenham,' said he sternly, in a firm low voice, 'it was one of your company that spoiled all, for it was ere he reached us that this discreet gentleman changed his pace. What does it mean?'

'Sergeant,' said Harry, who now stepped forward, 'report yourself for punishment!'

Very unsteadily the poor Sergeant came up and gave a reeling salute. He was plainly very drunk, yet to judge by his melancholy face sobered enough to know what he had done.

'I could not help it, Captain Drake,' blurted the unhappy man. 'I had not seen a horse for nigh on a year. I could not choose but look when I heard him come. It would have been well, but the Cimaroon who was with me jumped on my back to pull me down, and so we rolled over, and the enemy's horse descried us.'

'Enough,' said Frank sharply; 'you are a fool, and shall smart for your folly, but not now. We have other work. Go! You are Mr. Waldyve's prisoner.'

With another salute a little more steadily he faced about and withdrew, crestfallen beyond all words. I could see Frank was consumed with anger, but yet he

gave it not rein, for he had need of his calmness. That we were thus disappointed by the folly of one of our own company was bad enough when we had come so near to so great success, but there was worse beyond.

Our case was a very desperate one, that was plain. We had failed, and nothing was left us but to escape as quickly as we could to our ships, or at least the forest, ere the Spaniards could gather a force to attack us. How far they had discovered us was our only doubt, and Frank again questioned the muleteer to find out what they knew of our numbers.

‘Nay, that I know not,’ said the man. ‘Yet I am persuaded that unless you make haste away they will be upon you with all the force they can muster. They have good reason to fear your strength, or otherwise his Excellency would have trusted to his own guard. I tell you this because I owe them a grudge for making me a cat’s-paw.’

‘But why did he not trust to his guard?’ asked Frank.

‘Why, for good reason enough. “What folk can these be?” he says to the gentleman that met us. “Well,” says he, “there are only two who would have stomach for this wild stroke into the heart of Tierra-Firme, where no pirate has ever dared to set his foot before. I tell your Excellency it is Drake or the Devil.” “Say rather the Devil Drake,” says his Excellency, and thereupon very easily is persuaded to send me on instead of himself.’

This answer after his own heart brought a smile to

the general's face in spite of his anger, and helped him to calmly choose what course we should take. There were but two. One was to return by the terrible long and painful way we had come ; the other the short way along the road through Venta Cruz. The former was the safest, but we were all wearied out and footsore. Moreover, though disappointed of the gold and jewels, we had some two loads of silver to carry. I know not if it were past our strength to attempt it, but I know that desperate as we were over our cruel failure it was long past our inclination.

Pedro, who told us all this, stood waiting for an answer as the captain pondered. I knew what Frank was thinking of, for he presently looked hard at the Cimaroon. In success he doubted not their faith. In failure could he trust them ? This was the last and greatest of our perils, enough in all to have crushed a heart less stout than his.

'Pedro,' says he suddenly, still staring hard at the chief out of his wide blue eyes, 'will you give me your hand not to forsake me if I do it ?'

The Cimaroon knew what he meant ; so did we all. He drew his muscular black frame to the full height very proudly before he answered.

'Captain Drake,' says he then, 'you and I are chiefs who have sworn company. Rather would I die at your feet than leave you to your enemies, if you dare hold to it, as I know you dare.'

With that they gripped hands, and Frank, turning cheerfully to the company, gave us his resolution.

‘Seeing we have failed, lads,’ said he, ‘we must even haste back to our ships as fast as we may, from which we have been too long absent already, that we may defend them in case they be attacked, and moreover to let things quiet down a bit till we can try again. For try again we will, since I am resolved not to leave this coast till our voyage be made. Well, there are two ways back—one the long and weary track by which we came, the other short and quick, but it lies through Venta Cruz.’ He paused a moment to see the effect of his words, which seemed to catch the breath of those who listened, and they looked from one to the other as he went on. ‘By the long way half of us will drop with fatigue, to be picked up by Spaniards. The short way is easy along the high road. The mules will carry us as far as the town, and then all we have to do is to force a passage. I am for the short way; who is for the long?’

Not a man spoke, half of them being still breathless, I think, at the thought of this desperate expedient. Had any other man proposed it we should have set him down for a mad fellow, but we had all come to think that nothing was too hard for us under our heroic general, and not a man demurred.

‘Then we are all for the short way,’ cried Frank. ‘Mount then, and away! There is no time to lose, if we do not want the whole Panama garrison at our heels.’

In a few minutes we were all ambling on our borrowed steeds on the road towards Venta Cruz, silent and

oppressed with thinking of our forlorn attempt, yet each desperate and resolved to do his best. So we continued till within a mile of the town, where the road entered the forest again. A very perilous pass it looked, and Frank called on us to draw rein. The road was but from ten to twelve feet wide, and on either side a dense wall of tangled boughs and vines, reaching high above our heads, as thick as any well-kept Kentish hedge. For in that land the growth of the woods is so fast and rank that were it not that men were always at work shredding and ridding the way, it would be altogether lost and overgrown in one year. This constant cutting had made the leafy walls on either hand as dense as I have said, so that a man could hardly push through them without hurt.

Just as we drew rein I saw dimly, from where I rode in front with Frank, that our two Cimaroons had stopped about half a flight ahead of us. We drew near, and saw they were snuffing the air through their widely-distended nostrils like hounds.

‘Small shot in the wood!’ they said, as we came to them.

‘Where?’ says Frank. ‘Can you see them?’

‘No,’ said the elder Cimaroon; ‘but we can smell their matches. It is sure the wood is full of them on either hand.’

We could neither see nor smell anything, but doubted not it was as these strangely gifted men had said. The Spaniards had been too quick for us; they were ready. Clearly it was to be no *Nombre de Dios* affair again.

‘What is to be done?’ said I.

‘Why, go through with it,’ said Frank. ‘Now, lads, the wood is full of harquebusiers in ambush; we must force a passage. Hold your fire till their first volley is spent. Then one old English salute, and at them at push of pike in the old fashion!’

Our prisoner and the *recuas* were now turned away, with strict charge that none should follow us on pain of death. The Cimaroons divided the burden of the silver amongst them, and once more we pressed on.

‘Ho! stand!’ suddenly comes out of the darkness, and a Spanish captain glittering in brilliant harness steps into the road.

‘Ho!’ returns Frank, as though the road were his own, ‘stand and declare yourself!’

‘*Que gente?*’ says the Spaniard, very proud.

‘English,’ says Frank, blowing up the match of his pistol; ‘what would you?’

‘Gentlemen-Englishmen,’ cries the Spaniard, ‘it pains me to be so discourteous as to deny you passage this way. In the name of his most Catholic and Puissant Majesty the King of Spain, I bid you yield yourselves; and promise you, on the word and faith of a Castilian and a gentleman soldier, in that case to use you with all courtesy.’

‘Most worthy captain,’ says Frank, ‘it is utter grief to me that we are in too great haste to grant you this favour, and are forced to inform you, notwithstanding your courteous offer, that for the honour of her most High and Mighty Majesty the Queen of England,

Defender of the Faith, we must have passage this way.'

A sharp crack from Frank's pistol was the fitting conclusion to his speech, and I saw the Spaniard reel. Then there was a roar in front of us. Long tongues of flame leaped from the thickets ahead on either hand. A hot iron seemed to sear my leg. Frank clapped his hand to his thigh, and the man on the other side of me fell forward with a terrible cry. Thick and fast their shot whistled by. The Cimaroons had entirely disappeared, and we took what shelter we could.

The narrow road was now full of choking sulphurous smoke. We could see nothing but here and there the leaping flash of a harquebuss or the glimmer of a match. Almost as suddenly as it had begun their fire slackened, and then a merry trill went up, shrill and clear, from Frank's whistle.

We were all out in the road again in a minute. Bow-strings were singing, and small shot barking, as arrows and slugs went tearing into the dense smoke. Then we knew our silence had done its work, and brought the enemy rashly out of their cover. Shrieks, groans, curses, followed our discharge, and gave us courage to advance, which we did at a run through the choking smoke. Still we could not come to push of pike. They seemed to be retreating before us.

'Where are the Cimaroons?' said I, as I ran by Frank's side.

'I know not,' he said; 'God grant they have not deserted us.'

The words were hardly out of his mouth when an unearthly yell arose behind us, and Pedro bounded past towards the town. In a moment the air was rent with the horrible screams of his people. Encouraged, as I think, by hearing us advance, they had issued from the cover, where their horror of gunpowder had driven them. Howsoever they had feared before, they were now most terrible to behold.

Like incarnate fiends they bounded on before us, leaping, dancing, casting up their arms, and all the while yelling, '*Yó pehó ! Yó pehó !*' in most evil sort, and singing unearthly spells, after the fashion of their own savage warfare. Their frenzy seemed to give them more than human power ; and even as they ran they leaped so high as I never saw before, nor all the while did they cease to discharge their deadly arrows and awful war-cries.

Whether it were witchcraft or not I cannot tell, but very soon we were all as mad as they, and ran so fast that before the Spaniards reached the town gate we overtook many of them. They tried to make a stand, but it was to no purpose. The Cimaroons burrowed into the thickets like snakes, and drew them forth by the heels, never ceasing to yell their rhythmic '*Yó pehó ! Yó pehó !*' Half of the enemy we now saw were monks, who kicked and screamed most lustily till they were speared by the maddened Cimaroons.

Still a few pikemen boldly held their ground with the captain ; and in this struggle a few more of us were wounded. The Cimaroons fought like demons. One

close by me was run through with a pike, whereupon, so mad was he, that he drew himself along the shaft till he could reach the Spaniard who held it, and then stabbed his enemy to the death.

Such a sight of frantic, wanton daring I never saw. It seemed to strike terror into our enemy; for incontinently with a cry of horror they fled, and we leaped after them so fast that all entered the town together—sailors, Spaniards, friars, and Cimaroons, in one confused throng.

We gave them no time to recover their senses, but hustled them clean into the monastery, where we locked them up. In a very short space the town was fairly in our hands, and all quiet. Guards were set at the gate where we had entered, and also at the bridge at the other end of the town, whereby we should have to pass out over the river to continue our way. Then we had leisure to look to our wounds, which, though many, were slight, seeing that the enemy had but powdered us with hail-shot. The man who first fell by me was the only one of the company sorely hurt, and he died very soon after.

Our business in the town occupied us about an hour and a half. Amongst other merchandise we dealt in were above a thousand bulls and pardons which had newly come out of Rome. With these the mariners made more sport than was needful, yet the church and all other things ecclesiastic were respected.

We found some women there, moreover, with new-born infants, who had come thither because no Spanish

child may safely be born in Nombre de Dios by reason of its pestilent airs. These were terribly affrighted by our presence, and would not be content till the general went to them himself as soon as he had leisure, to show it was indeed Francis Drake who had taken the town, whereby they were forthwith comforted, knowing that in his hands they were safe, as indeed they were, even from the fury of the Cimaroons, who very faithfully kept their word to the general, and hurt no one after the fight was done.

Our dealings, though not large, brought us no little comfort for the loss of our Treasurer, and it was more heavily laden than when we entered that we continued our way, after blocking the bridge to prevent pursuit.

CHAPTER XXIV

OF the terrible march we had ere we regained our ships I will not speak. Our spirits were at the lowest ebb by reason of our failure, for what we had seen in the governor's cellars at Nombre de Dios had so turned our heads that we counted the plunder we had got as nothing. Moreover our general was in a desperate hurry to reach the ships before evil befell them, and we therefore marched so rapidly that we had no time or strength to get proper victuals, and were always half fasting. Our boots were worn to tatters, our feet cut and blistered, our wounds galled us, the mosquitoes tormented us, and beneath all, as I say, rankled our failure.

Under such a load of trouble I think we should have sunk had it not been for Frank, who never ceased to cheer us with new plans for the making of our voyage. What bred most wonder in me was the order he took to lighten our pains. For if one complained of his worn boots or his wound, Frank would always complain louder, and cry plague on the stones, the boots, the gnats, and everything. I knew his wound was slight and his feet whole, so asked him the reason of his words.

'Why,' says he, 'see you not that the poor lads, however bad they be, will take some grain of courage if they think there is one who is worse and yet can go on? and moreover, where captain and men share alike you are most sure to find yourself marching in company content.'

Yet for all this many fainted by the way, and then the Cimaroons would cease their valiant bragging, which otherwise was unceasing since our capture of Vera Cruz, and bear such as could not walk between two of them very loving and cheerful for two miles or more at a spell.

The poor Sergeant, the cause of all our woe, plodded on in silence at Harry's heels. He looked like a man who would never joy again, and by no means could I win him to speech.

Seven days we toiled thus to the mouth of a river called by the Cimaroons Rio Tortugas, and hither to our great joy came the master, Ellis Hixom, to whom our captain had sent, and took us off to Fort Diego in the pinnace.

There was great joy at our meeting in spite of our little plunder, since they had begun to fear we were destroyed. They said they hardly knew us for the same men, except the captain, so haggard and thin and burnt we were, to say no more of the tatters to which the brakes and stones had turned our clothes. Hunger and toil and grief had doubtless made great havoc with us, and the fire of that terrible sun had burnt us well-nigh black.

My Señorita, to whom I went for comfort soon after I got to the ships, seemed quite shocked to see me.

‘Madre de Dios, Señor!’ she cried, clasping her little hands in terror. ‘How you are changed! Ah! and you are wounded. It is well you have come back to me to be made yourself again. Indeed I am glad you are come back.’

She held out her hands in such frank welcome that I felt half healed already, and sat down as she bade me on her own cushions.

‘Indeed I am glad you are come back to us,’ she said again.

‘Then did not Master Hixom treat you well?’ I asked.

‘Ah, I hate him,’ she said, knitting her dainty brows. ‘He is a stock, a stone, a log! He kept us well, but I hate him.’

I never knew why she was so hot against him, but I could only smile to think she must have tried her coaxing on him as she had on me, but with less success. He was a flinty Puritan from Plymouth with a wife and children, who would not have unbent, I think, had Princess Helen herself put up her lips to him. She begged me to come and be her gaoler again, and I left her with such hope as it was not hard to give.

That evening as I sat with others in the general’s bower, talking over what next was to be attempted, we were surprised by Sergeant Culverin saluting in the doorway.

'I come, Captain Drake, by your leave,' says he, holding himself very stiff, 'to report myself for punishment.'

'I shall give you none,' says Frank, but looked very stern at him, for he was ever slow to forget a fault. 'You have suffered enough already with your wound. and what of your fault is unpunished is wiped out by your valiant bearing before Venta Cruz.'

For indeed he had done wonders there, and had gotten a sore pike-thrust in the arm, from which he had suffered great pain unmurmuring on our pitiful march.

'By your leave, Captain Drake,' said he, when Frank finished, 'I crave you allot some punishment to me. It was a most grievous breach of the discipline of the wars, and I shall joy no more till it be atoned. Moreover it will be an evil example to the youth of your company, and like to breed much discontent and danger to our voyage if I go unpunished. Therefore, for the love of soldiership, I pray you omit not this just dealing with me. The Signor John Peter Pugliano always held——'

'Peace, enough!' said Frank. 'It shall be as you say, so you will spare us your Italian's wisdom. I reverence your soldiership, and adjudge you the honourable estate of an hour on the hobby-horse.'

A rail was soon set up by some of the mariners, who were nothing loath to be revenged on the old soldier. On this he was speedily set with his hands bound behind him, and a harquebuss hanging to each foot. There he sat stiff and upright, as though he were in the

emperor's tilting ground again. He gave no heed to the jeers of younger sailors, but sat grimly on uncomplaining.

As I passed him presently I could see the pain was as much as he could bear, weak as he was from hunger and his wound. Just then one threw a tuft of grass at him. Then he looked round fiercely, but he only bit his lip to keep in the angry burst that was on his tongue, and stared grimly in front of him again.

Then two or three began to whisper it was a sin that such a tall fellow who took his punishment so well should be tormented for what was after all but too deep a pull at his flask. So they went amongst the others, and the jeering ceased. Then they fell to encouraging him and watching the sand-glass, till at last, seeing how stiff and grim he still sat, they went in a body to Frank and would not be content till they had leave to take him down, which at last they did, in spite of his angry protesting that he would sit his punishment out.

So their past toils and grief were fast forgotten, and all talk was of what was to be attempted next. Some were for attacking the treasure frigates which were sure to be moving on the coast now the Plate Fleets were in, but others counted this but folly, seeing how strong and well manned with soldiers were the wafters that convoyed them. Others, amongst whom was Mr. Oxenham, were for gathering fresh victuals from the provision ships, which were always unprotected, that we might thereby recover our sick and get sufficient strength for

another attempt by land, which now was not to be thought of, seeing that all the Main was alarmed and half our company sick.

Pedro was very earnest for us to attempt Veragua, a rich town between Nombre de Dios and Nicaragua, where his former master, Señor Pezoro, had the richest gold mine in all the north side, whence he won daily above £200 worth of gold. All this he stored in a great treasure house, to which Pedro promised he could lead us undescried through the woods and make us masters of the untold treasure therein. Every Cimaron on the Main would further our attempt, he said, because this Pezoro was known to be worse than a devil to his slaves, and hated more than any man in all the Indies.

But our general was loath to undertake so long a march, though sorely tempted by the greatness of the prize. Our company was too much broken by wounds and sickness to venture so far, so it was concluded to send forth two pinnaces, which were all we could man, to try what could be done. Mr. Oxenham took the *Bear* eastwards towards Tolu to gather victuals, as he had wished, while the general took the *Minion* to ply towards the west, and have dealings, if it were possible, in the treasure trade, which we knew to be great at this time from Veragua and Nicaragua to the Fleet.

As for me, I was far too sick with my wound to join either ; but not being quite so spent as some, was able to take my old charge of the prisoners. Being little able to walk, I was almost entirely in the ship with the Spaniards. Indeed I had little duty or pleasure else-

where. Hixom, our master, was again set over those that remained, and, since Harry, Frank, and Mr. Oxenham were away in the pinnaces, there was no one amongst the mariners with whom I cared to converse so much as the courtly old Scrivano and his friends.

And why should I not confess the rest since I have unfolded so much? Whether I did wrong I cannot tell. I had abandoned the guide whom all my life I had followed, because, as I thought, he had only led me astray. It was hard to trust to anything again. Often I would play with Harry's rapier and think. I know not if the quick, hard life I had been leading was to blame, but it would not say me Ay or No!

After all my recent toil and labour it was so pleasant, to have her at my side, to look at and talk to. Pleasant, too, it was to see how she was bent on winning me, whether for her father's sake to earn him favour at my hands, or for very wanton love of winning a new kind of conquest, I cannot tell; pleasant, too, to mark how lovingly she sought to ease my pain and beguile the lagging hours, how tenderly she dressed my wound and smoothed my pillow when she bade me sleep. What wonder, then, if I gave myself up to the sweet beguilement! What wonder if, when she had set me to rest and no one was by, I drew the pretty face to mine and our lips met! I know not, I say, how I shall be blamed. She was so sweet and gentle and kind; I was so weak and weary. It was all I had to give; it was the payment most grateful to her. Well! well! It is long past now for good or ill. If any has been so

diseased as I in body and spirit and so sweetly tended, lying as I did all day in the murmur and savour of a tropic spring in the midst of those jewelled seas, let him judge me.

There were some among my prisoners who looked on with little ease and twirled their fierce moustaches, but the worldly old Scrivano would not have it otherwise.

‘Let them be,’ he would say; ‘it will not last for ever. A friend at court is worth winning.’

It was when she told me this that I first knew a sweet fear that all she did might not be done in wantonness or even for the prisoners’ sakes. Till then I had thought it was only in their behoof she was kind, and I trod my flowery path with a light heart. Now I began to doubt we were come to where thorns were hidden beneath the blossoms by the way, but it was still too fair and pleasant for me to stop. In my weakness I said there was still time enough.

So we continued till near the middle of March, when Mr. Oxenham returned in great heart with a smart frigate laden with a good store of maize and live hogs and hens, which greatly rejoiced us, since we were pining for fresh food. I was nevertheless not so glad to see him back as I had hoped, since now the general was away there was none to prevent him coming on board my ship every day, where he talked so gaily with my Señorita, to her manifest content, that I wished in my heart his voyage had been less fortunate.

I was overjoyed when Frank came back, not only

because it put an end to Mr. Oxenham's visits, but also for the news he brought. Off the Cabeças he had met with a frigate of Nicaragua, which he had lightened of a pretty store of gold and her Genoese pilot. This man, who but a week before was at Veragua, had assured our general that the whole coast was palsied with fear of him. So fast had he moved and so suddenly struck that it seemed, so the man said, nothing less than magical, and none knew where their dreaded enemy would next appear. The plain truth was that, eschewing armour after the manner of English mariners, we marched more quickly than the Spaniards ever thought possible, and this greatly increased their fears.

So from Nicaragua to Carthagena they lay shivering in their beds, never knowing if they should sleep the night in peace. Our pilot was only too glad to join his fortunes to ours on promise that his right should be done him, and had led our captain into Veragua harbour, where lay a frigate laden with above a million in gold, not daring to venture forth. But by a new order of watch which they had taken, the pinnace was descried and the attempt abandoned, since there lay a still better chance in the Chagres river.

The galleys that were to waft the gold fleet, the Genoese said, were laid up at Nombre de Dios to be fitted. Thus there was nothing to protect the gold frigates but land soldiers, with whom Frank doubted not he could deal, if he gathered all his whole men together, and to this end he was now returned to join Mr. Oxenham.

The frigate which the *Lion* had captured, being a very smart one, fell in well with Frank's purpose. She was speedily careened, new tallowed, and launched again, as stout a man-of-war as any on the coast. All the best of our ordnance was set aboard of her, and as soon as Easter was past and the men refreshed Frank set sail with her and the *Bear* for the Rio Chagres.

Being willing to break from the dalliance in which I lived, I had craved to be taken with them, for I was fast mending since fresh meat had grown abundant. But Frank would not hear of it, and once more I was left alone with my prisoners, of which in my heart I fear I was glad.

Sweet indeed were the days that followed. Every hour my strength seemed to grow, and since there was nothing to do after I had made my rounds amongst the sick, I wandered with my Señorita along the shore or in the woods wellnigh the livelong day, and was never weary. Yet what we spoke of I cannot tell. I can hardly recall a phrase she uttered, yet she chattered like the golden brook, where we loved best to sit, and I listened more willing and untiring than ever I did to the wisest voices of the ancients.

Of herself and of me it seems to me now was all her talk, the empty prattle of a child; yet I sat and watched her ripe face and wanted no more. Ours was the life of the lazy pelicans and the scarlet cranes, and all the other shore fowl that breathed around us that tingling tropic life, and crowned with their presence the enchanting beauty of the scene.

Once, and only once, I remember she wandered to deeper things. She spoke of the faith of her people, and how she longed sometimes to be a nun, and have done with love and be good again.

‘Are you a heretic?’ she then said, suddenly looking at me very wistfully.

‘I trust not,’ I said, smiling, for it seemed a strangely merry thing to me to see her serious.

‘Why do you laugh?’ she said, pouting a little. ‘My Padre says all Englishmen are Lutheran heretics and will go to torment. How can you laugh at that? It makes me very sad to think of you there, and to think I shall not find you in heaven when I come. Why will you be a heretic and pray to the devil?’

‘Ah, gentle Señorita,’ I answered, ‘never think of those things. Your pretty head must not wear such ugly thoughts. Forget it now; go and crown yourself with flowers as you did yesterday, and I will worship a true goddess and no devil, though something of a witch. So you shall see I am a true believer in your loveliness and no heretic. What would you more?’

‘Witch or not,’ she answered, rising with a smile, ‘I have tamed your tongue, my faithful worshipper, and brought it to a most gentle pacing. I may not choose but be carried now whithersoever it will amble with me.’

‘’Twas but a sorry jade,’ I said, as she rose and gathered some bright flowers that seemed to bend down to kiss her hand. ‘Yet since you took the rein I think it can never stumble, nor ever falter or grow

dull so long as it feels the gentle spurring of your eye.'

'Save us now, worshipper, from your sharp and stinging comparisons,' she said, as she turned on me radiantly, her pliant figure entwined with a tender vine of rose-coloured flowers, and her glossy hair crowned with glowing blossoms, 'and send your goddess a daintier offering!'

'Nay, goddess,' said I, 'it was a bright and glittering offering enough till your radiance put it out of countenance.'

'Then must you offer me something brighter still,' she said, as she sat herself upon a great rock half hidden in flowers. 'See, your goddess is enthroned. To your knees, errant worshipper; I will endure no heretical postures.'

So I knelt before her and offered her such dainty sweetmeat phrases as every pretty woman loves, so they be compounded to her taste and served so that she may taste without offence.

In such wise my pretty plaything and I played together till the sun began to sink and I returned to my duties, wondering idly, as the wise *Sieur de Montaigne* tells us in his *Apology for Raymond Sebond* he did of his cat, whether she played with me or I with her; and wondering, too, still more to think how the magic of the west, or warfare, or whatsoever else it might be, had changed me. It was barely a year ago since I was alone with another woman, the first I ever knew. How different it was then. and yet perhaps

how like, if we but knew the springs of our hearts! But enough of that! Let me not speak of those two with one breath.

I seemed another man as I looked backward. Yet was there no miracle. For surely it is no more than natural that, when a man has burst the bonds in which he blindly bound down and tormented his soul, it should grow quickly to its proper shape if it finds itself planted in soil that is apt to its true nature.

All too soon, as we thought, and yet perhaps not soon enough, Frank came back with the frigate and the pinnace in company with a goodly bark.

'A fat prize at last,' I cried, as he rowed up to the ship, 'and I not there to see. Is our voyage made?'

'Not yet,' said Frank, 'and yet I hope not far from it. Yonder is no prize, but a Frenchman with seventy good Huguenots aboard, whom we have admitted to our company. Let me present to you her captain, most worthy Monsieur Tetú.'

He bowed with great ceremony and much spreading abroad of his hands, and I asked if he had any news from Europe, at which to my surprise he seemed very pained.

'Yes,' broke in Frank, 'he has news. Would God he had not!'

'Is the Queen married then?' I asked quickly, for it was always the first inquiry of strangers in those shifting times.

'No!' answered Frank, 'nor like to be, it seems. Be pleased, Monsieur, to tell Mr. Festing what tidings you bring.'

‘ And with that the little French captain, with excited gesture and kindling eyes, poured into my scorched ears the black and awful tale of the Massacre of Paris on St. Bartholomew’s day, on the occasion of the King of Navarre’s marriage with the Princess Margaret. We could none of us speak for a while when he ended the relation of that most foul and detestable crime. I could only feel leap up in my heart a mad longing, like Frank’s, to be revenged, and that speedily. It seemed to revive in me all my old detestation of the Papists, and the whole body of them, innocent and guilty alike, seemed again a cursed thing in my eyes.

Many a better man than I was seized with the same mad rage when he knew that tale. How could we be otherwise? Yet I contained myself enough to express my pity to the French captain, who seemed well-nigh broken-hearted at the blot upon his country’s fame.

‘ Truly, Mr. Festing, it is hard to bear,’ he said, with a bitterness that cut me to the heart. ‘ I never thought to see the day when I could say that those Frenchmen were happiest who were farthest from France. That is why I have sailed hither and turned my back on her. I wash my hands of her. She is France no longer, but rather Frenzy, and all Gaul is gall indeed.’

His attempt at pleasantry touched me very deeply, for I knew how bitterly he felt the loss of his country, and I tried some apology.

‘ You are kind, Mr. Festing,’ he said, taking my hand very warmly, after the manner of his country. ‘ It is

not France—my pure, simple, single-hearted France—that has done this. It is Italian practices that have over-mastered French simplicity. Truly, sir, Italy is an accursed land, that curses all it touches with its noisome humours.'

He seemed a brave heart, and was a seaman in all his inches. For my part I conceived a great liking for him, though I think Frank would have been glad enough to be well rid of him and his company.

'Yet I could not say him nay,' he said to me, 'when I saw his poor fellows more than half starved. Moreover he was so mighty civil, and said that five weeks ago he had heard of us and of our great dealings, as he pleased to put it, and ever since he had been seeking, desiring nothing so much as to meet with the gentlemen who had set the whole Spanish Main in a tremble. I was bound to relieve him with our spare victuals, and so was obliged to abandon our attempt on the Chagres river.'

'And then you agreed to venture in company?' said I.

'Yes,' said he. 'Yet I will not say it was without some jealousy and mistrust, for all his civility. Yet, seeing how earnest he was to be our friend, and how strong to hurt us if he were our enemy, we concluded to take him and twenty of his company and venture equally.'

'And is it man for man and ton for ton again?' I asked.

'No, lad, no,' answered Frank. 'That would never

do. As I told our Monsieur, though his company was seventy and mine now but thirty-one, mine must weigh more than his, since in our purposed play the principal actors were not numbers of men, but rather their judgment and knowledge; to which arguments he agreed with the best grace he could. The more so as I showed him his great tonnage was no good in our present case.'

'Then are we not to attempt the Chagres fleet?' said I.

'No,' he answered; 'that is where they are looking for us. We must attempt the place where they last expect us.'

'And where is that?' said I.

'Where but knocking at the back door of Nombre de Dios,' he answered, laughing to see my surprise at this his wildest plan of all.

'Now save you, Frank,' said I, 'from a very mid-summer madness! You will never get in there again, or at least get out again if you do.'

'Oh,' says he, ''tis not so mad as that. We have no cause to go in. We will get the gold outside. The great *recuas* are passing by road now the whole way. What is easier with our present help than to deal with one of them when it is all but home, and thinks all danger is over? Pedro will lead us thither, into the Rio Francisco and then a little march. I have already sent for the Cimaroons. Many times, Jasper, we have struck amiss. God has shown the Spaniards great mercy; yet now, I think, since He has sent us this

French company, with tidings of this last most bloody dealing of the Italian priest against His faithful people of Paris, it is surely His will that we shall entreat these idolaters according to their iniquity; and so by His grace we will, and our voyage be made.'

CHAPTER XXV

IN six days all was ready, and our Frenchmen sufficiently refreshed from the nearest magazines to undergo the labour of our desperate attempt. When the hour was come I went to take leave of my Señorita.

‘Sweet goddess!’ said I, for she would not be otherwise named by me, ‘your faithful worshipper comes to crave your leave to depart.’

‘Madre de Dios!’ she said, looking at me with wide, frightened eyes. ‘What new wild venture is this? When will this devil cease to torment my people and set us free?’

‘Does my goddess then so long to change her paradise?’ I asked.

‘Yes,’ she answered petulantly, ‘for her worshipper loves her not and is faithless, or he would be content to stay here in paradise. But no,’ she went on, starting suddenly up, ‘you shall not go. I forbid it. You will be killed, and I—I shall be left with these rough men. You must stay and worship me.’

‘Nay, let me go and worship you,’ said I. ‘Lip-service is unworthy to offer at your shrine; I will go and bring you better offerings than that, so you will give me leave.’

With such jesting talk I tried to win her free consent, that we might not mar the pleasant comedy we played. Still she would not give it, and I thought she but held it back in her wanton way, wishing for more. But at last her face quite altered, and she turned quickly on me.

‘Hold ! hold !’ she said. ‘Your tongue has a devil. You and your captain are devils together. Go to him ; but—oh, Gasparo, I have played too long—I have played till play has grown to earnest. Go ! but come back to play no more. Come back to love me ; or, Gasparo,’ she continued, sinking her voice to an awe-hushed whisper, ‘I know the devil will come into my heart, too, and drive me to do I know not what.’

Just then Frank’s whistle sounded a shrill call to embark. I could not think what to say or do. I bent over her to snatch a hasty kiss and go, since it was so we always parted now, but she shrank away.

‘No !’ she said ; ‘the play is done. Our lips shall meet no more till they meet in earnest, till they meet in love. Go now, and the Holy Mother be with you !’

An hour afterwards I was sailing merrily onwards, bearing room for the Cabeças. Our fleet was made up of the new-tallowed frigate and two pinnaces. In them were fifteen English, twenty French, and our Cimaroons ; and who amongst them all was so tormented with his crowded thoughts as I, or rejoiced so much in the perilous nature of our enterprise ?

What would have happened to me and her I cannot dare to think, had it not been that my thoughts were

occupied more and more fully each mile we sailed with the wild excitement of our new, most daring enterprise. By the time we had passed the Cabeças, where we left the frigate with a mixed guard, and were sailing with the pinnaces aloof the shore towards the Rio Francisco, all I had left behind was wellnigh lost in what was to come.

Arrived at the river, which is but five leagues by sea from Nombre de Dios, we landed very quietly and dismissed the pinnaces, charging those that had guard of them to return to the Cabeças and be in the river again without fail in four days, which time, Pedro deemed, was all that we should want, since now the *recuas* were coming daily from Panama, and the road by Nombre de Dios was not above seven leagues from the spot where we landed.

So we started through the dense forest once more in our old order, yet in better heart than ever, in spite of our miscarriages. For now we knew what the danger was and feared it less. Besides, there was not one of us in whose heart did not burn a mad desire for revenge. The flame of anger which the news from Paris had kindled in all the company consumed every other thought, and none cared what came of him so long as he made shift to strike one good blow in return.

A great part of our company had sailed under the Prince of Condé's commission in the old days in the narrow seas, and some even had served in French ships, whereby a sort of brotherhood had grown up between our mariners and the Huguenots—a kindliness which

those now with us did not a little to keep warm by the very cheerful spirits with which they infected us. During all the voyage from Fort Diego they had made great light of our perils, and protested a very great readiness for the attempt. Indeed we found their courage very hot, out of their joy, as they ceased not to tell us, at marching under our captain, of whom they had heard so much since they had been on the coast, no less than from the natural disposition of their countrymen for attack, and all services where spirit is of more account than endurance.

It was no small hardship to them to hold their peace, and our method of silent and catlike marching, in which, by use, we were now almost as skilful as the Cimaroons, was a great marvel to them, as was the discipline by which it was maintained to their captain. By no means could they come to the same stillness as we, whereat the Cimaroons conceived a great scorn of them, and would give no heed or trust to them. In answer the Frenchmen fell into a great distrust of them, as we burrowed deeper and deeper into the tangled forest and mazy ravines, protesting that it was madness to go on so, since, should the negroes prove false, we could never find the pinnaces again.

This was true enough; but Frank gave them to understand such fears were groundless and must not be broached, since we had made long trial of the negroes' constancy, and if they feared that they should never have come. Moreover, he took such sharp order with them, by Monsieur Tetú's consent and furtherance, to

have silence observed that in a very short space they were as firmly under his spell as any of us, and things went well again.

Having come thus within a mile of the road on the second evening, we chose a place where we might lie and refresh ourselves all night, since the *recuas* did not reach Nombre de Dios till morning. This was a perilous time for us, for the Frenchmen, being new to the trade, were, for the most part, too excited to sleep.

Nor can I blame them, for we lay so near to that great town, wherein were now enough soldiers to have eaten our whole company at a sitting, that we could hear plainly what was passing there. As we lay in the brakes, still as mice, we could mark the lazy challenge of the watch and the noisy laughter of the guard at their cups, mingling with the busy din of the carpenters on the fleet. They had just begun work; for, because of the great heat, they do not work in the day, and all night long there came up from the harbour the sounds of saw, and axe, and hammer, as they wrought busily to get the fleet ready for sea.

Soon after we came thither two *recuas* passed out of the Panama gate and toiled up the hill to us with such a monstrous clanging of bells that we had much ado to keep the Frenchmen quiet, so moved were they at the sound. Soon they passed. We could hear their music die away towards the south, and then on that side all was still, and we fell to listening to the labour in the harbour again.

Hour by hour the still night wore on. The English-

men about me fell asleep, as well as some of the French, though I grieved to see the wine-flasks passing about amongst others more than gave hope of cool heads in the morning.

Harry, who lay by my side, was one of the first to compose himself to rest. I saw him take out a little picture from his breast. I knew too well what it was. He kissed it lovingly, and then quietly stretched himself out and lay quite still. The Sergeant slept at his feet. Harry had craved leave for him to come and retrieve his reputation, saying well he was the least likely of all the company to get us descried again.

It was in the first gray of the morning that I awoke, with Harry's hand on my shoulder and the faint sound of bells in my ears. His face was radiant, and he held up his finger to bid me listen. Close by lay a Cimaroon with his head uplifted, like a dog when he suddenly hears a strange tread at hand. His eyes were wide open, glistening and bloodshot, and his big white teeth gleaming as he listened intently. I could see he was greatly excited, and so was I to watch him. Suddenly he turned to me as though satisfied.

'What is it?' I whispered.

'The biggest luck ever men done got,' he answered. 'Hark! hark!'

'Yes,' said I; 'I can hear it is a *recua* from Panama, and a big one by the sound.'

'A *recua*!' he answered scornfully. 'It is one, two, three *recuas*! Now you will have more gold and silver than all of us can carry away!'

‘And more soldiers than we can drive away perhaps,’ whispered Harry ; ‘but we must strike all the lustier, that is all.’

Our talk was cut short by the word being passed that we should creep on to the edge of the road, which we did very quiet and quickly, being divided into two bands, under the general and Mr. Oxenham, as before, that we might strike head and tail again.

By the time we were in our places I could not doubt that what the Cimaron had said was right. The sounds from the town were hushed as the dawn brightened, and I could plainly hear such a clanging of bells as told me clearly there must be many more mules than I had ever heard together before.

Nearer and nearer they drew ; and the louder waxed the deep-toned music, so sweet in our ears, the quieter were we. Not a sign was there to tell of our presence, save now and again the dull snap of a bow being bent, or the low sound of breath as the matches of our small-shot men were blown up, or a gentle rustle of the brakes as a young hand moved nervously.

Everything was at last drowned in the clash of the bells. Now they had quite passed Mr. Oxenham’s party in the rear. Now the clank of arms was abreast of us. I saw Frank’s whistle at his lips, once more its piercing note split the air, and we were all on our feet rushing down into the road, shouting, ‘Drake ! Drake !’ like madmen.

As I leapt down into it I could see a sight that made my heart bound. Some three hundred mules, laden with

little leather bags, and all tied tail to tail, stretched along the road. In front glittered the morions and corselets of some score of soldiers, and at different points in the line and in the far rear, where our men were already engaged, were more. In front of all rode two or three officers in splendid armour.

But there was no time to see more. In a moment I had discharged my pistol, and was hand to hand at it with the foot. Harry was by my side at like work, and I could see the Sergeant, sword in hand, making for one of the officers.

At our first onset they fell back, being quite unprepared and dismayed with our shot and arrows. Half of them carried their morions in their hands, and none had their matches ready. So we were left to stop the mules, which all lay down quietly as before, but it was only a short respite.

The balls and hail-shot were soon flying about our ears up the narrow road. Poor Captain Tetú rushed most valiantly upon them, sword in hand, but was doubled up in the road before he came to his distance. For a while it was desperate work. In a confused mass we fought and struggled together, and the woods echoed with the explosions of the small shot and the frantic cries of 'Drake! Drake!' and 'Santiago! Santiago!'

I was hand to hand again with a soldier, who gave me stiff work, when I heard the plunging of a horse and the whistle of a blade behind me. I made sure my end had come, and turned to hear a thundering shout

of 'Drake,' and see Sergeant Culverin dash by into the thick of the foot.

He seemed a new man. As he passed he slashed at my opponent and set me free. I could not even then but admire his splendid management of his frantic horse in the press. Hewing and slashing, he made straight for a mounted officer, who was fighting like a lion. Involuntarily I paused to watch and get my breath. Straight at him the Sergeant rode, and with a sudden check of the bit, made his stolen charger rear right up against the Spaniard, at his rein hand, so that he was wholly guarded from the officer's blade. Then as the horse descended the Sergeant's heavy 'schiacona' rang upon the Spaniard's morion. The officer reeled in his saddle, his sword dropped, and his horse turned and galloped madly out of the press towards the town.

The old riding-master had been too much for the cavalier's skill. The victory of our horse seemed to paralyse the foot. Resistance ceased. They only thought of escape. Down the road, into the woods, anywhere, they fled to avoid us. 'Yó peho! yó peho!' seemed once more to people the air with fiends, as the leaping, yelling Cimaroons danced after them, almost as fast as the Sergeant rode.

How far he would have continued his pursuit in the midst of his diabolic company I cannot tell, for Frank's shrill whistle called all back. Mr. Oxenham's work was done as soon as ours, for the Spaniards in the rear, having no officer to encourage them, were soon persuaded to leave the mules in his care. So that now all

hands were wanted for the heaviest part of the task, which was to get our plunder into the forest.

Like children we went at it, half-mad with joy over our extraordinary good fortune. After all our toil and all our failures we had succeeded at last, and that beyond all our hopes. We found our prize was one *recua* of fifty mules and two of seventy. Every mule carried three hundred pounds' weight of silver, making in all some twenty-five tons, besides such store of jewels and yellow bars and quoits, as made us have no eyes for the baser metal.

'All hands now,' sang out Frank, 'to ease the mules, which must be sore weary, and yarely now! or the Spaniards will be taking pains to stay us doing the poor animals this kindness. And, Sergeant,' he said, as Culverin reined up, 'our horse shall go to the front to give us advertisement of their coming, that we may prepare a salutation for them.'

'An honourable service, Captain Drake,' said the Sergeant, beaming with delight, 'for which I crave leave to thank you.'

'Nay, Sergeant,' laughed Frank, 'it is yours of right. I marked how you took the weather of the cavalier. I never brought up to windward better myself. Away now, for we must work.'

And indeed there was need. In spite of the huge loads the Cimaroons could carry, it was no light or speedy labour we had, especially since some were hurt. Yet the only sore wound we had was the French captain's, who was so grievously struck with hailshot

in the belly that he could not walk, in spite of most valiant endeavours.

The whole time we worked we could hear the turmoil our visit had caused in the town. Trumpets were braying and drums beating up and down, as though the devil had broken loose, as perhaps they thought he had. We could not doubt that the soldiers we had relieved had given, after the manner of Spaniards, so monstrous and boasting an account of our numbers that the whole garrison was making ready to visit us.

Indeed, as our last mule was eased, the Sergeant came galloping in to bring news of a mighty preparation of horse and foot on the march out of the Plaza, as he guessed by the notes of their trumpets. This great preparation was our saving instead of our undoing, for by the time the enemy's horse and foot reached the *recuas* the foremost of us were already far in the woods, intent on burying some of our silver, which was over and above what we could carry. Being thus busy we could not receive them, and since they had no mind to follow us through the forest, we could not choose but disappoint them in their intention of saluting us.

Some fifteen tons we buried, partly under fallen trees, partly in the bed of a river, and partly in the holes of land-crabs, whereof we found a colony, and begged of them this hospitality ; and so, with some ten tons of silver and all the gold and jewels, we went on our way, the Cimaroons bearing loads which were a marvel to us all how they did not break their backs.

At a fitting place the Cimaroons made a little house

for the French captain, for by no means could he be persuaded to cumber us, so that we should carry less of the treasure. He stoutly protested that nothing but a rest would save his life. So, being unable to move him from his valiant resolve, we were compelled against our wills to leave him in charge of two of his men, who vowed they would not desert their captain while there was a spark of life left in him.

We had not gone far when the Frenchmen began to cry out that one of their number was missing, and were for going back, thinking him to be lying wounded on the road. Upon this our captain made searching examination to find out how it should be, which he soon did from a Cimaron.

‘I done see him,’ said the negro. ‘He done got too much pillage and too much wine, so hedone go on before in a hurry to get to the ships. I think he done lost his way.’

This indeed was true, as we had occasion afterwards to know. Our captain was angry at it, and would not stay longer, being in a great hurry to get to the pinnaces in the Rio Francisco before they were discovered by the Spaniards, as he doubted not they would endeavour, having been so outwitted by us.

So we toiled on under our loads, through a terrible tempest of rain and wind which overtook us, and made our march none the easier by reason of the swollen torrents and mire. Yet if we had heavy loads we had light hearts, and comforted ourselves with a hundred jests at our luck, no less than with a speedy hope of reaching our pinnaces.

It was early on the second day that we came to the river, and all quickened their pace to be among the first to tell their comrades the news. Yet were our pains thrown away; for when we had passed out of the forest and reached the rendezvous not a sign of the pinnaces was to be seen, only the river rolling down in double volume, brown and swollen from the rain.

‘Where can they be?’ said I to Frank.

‘Nay, lad, who can tell?’ he said, looking very grave. ‘Unless,’ he added more cheerfully, ‘the tempest has delayed them. The wind was westerly. Let us go and have a look out to sea. Maybe they are even now at hand.’

In great anxiety we hurried to a place whence a great part of the coast could be descried, and the rest who were not too weary, seeing what the general did, followed. Eagerly, as the sea opened out before us, we scanned its glittering surface towards the Cabeças, whence our pinnaces were to come, and there, to our horror, we saw rowing, as though from the very spot, seven Spanish pinnaces, crammed with men in glittering harness!

CHAPTER XXVI

CERTAIN men, whom misfortune and loss of riches have driven to seek comfort in philosophy, have devoured much paper and spilled an infinity of ink in dispraise of gold and silver, railing at those metals with a plentiful store of scornful epithets, to show their baseness and want of true value.

Had any such been with us now they would have found a very plausible argument for their conclusions. Rolling in gold and silver, we were destitute; though oppressed with wealth, we were poorer than church mice. Willingly we would have given all we had, and more, for one smart, well-furnished frigate in the road.

After the discovery of our forlorn state many were so moved that they cast away their gold, and, losing all hope of escape, gave themselves up to despair; and not without excuse. For we could not doubt but that our pinnaces had been taken, and that our stronghold at Fort Diego would be revealed by the torture of prisoners. Thus all hope of ever getting back to our homes was gone; and the greater part of the company, losing all heart, began to murmur and complain very bitterly against the captains who had brought them to such a

pass. I can say no more of the depth to which our spirits sank, or the misery of that hour, than that it was one of those times when Frank Drake's nature rose to its greatest height. He leaped upon a log, and with his clear, cheerful voice addressed them without a note of fear or misgiving, where no one else could discern the smallest ray of encouragement or the forlornest hope of safety.

'Shame on you! shame!' he cried. 'What faint-heartedness is this? If you miscarry, so do I. You venture no further than I. And is this a time to wail and fear? If it be, then is it also a time to hasten to prevent what we fear. If the enemy have prevailed against our pinnaces, which God forbid, yet all is not lost. Only half their work is done. They must have time to search and examine their prisoners as to where our strength lies; and then they will want some time to form their resolution, and quarrel who is to command. Ah! you know, not Spaniards. Then they will want time to order a fleet twice or thrice as large as needful; *item*, time to come to our ships; *item*, time to resolve upon their method of attack; *item*, time to find stomach to deliver it. And before all this will be discharged we can get to our ships, if you will so resolve, like the men that you have at divers times shown yourselves.'

'But how? how?' they cried, as he paused.

'Why, now you speak like men,' he said, 'and give a captain heart to save you. By land, I think, we cannot come to them, though our Pedro would have us so try. It is sixteen days' journey thither, and before that the

Spaniards will have struck. Yet by sea we may. See you those trees God has sent down the river for you by last night's storm? Of those we can make a raft; and four of us sail aloof the shore and call the ships hither. Of those four I shall be one; who will be the others?'

The words were hardly out of his mouth when Harry had shouted 'I!' and then followed a clamour of 'I's' in English, French, and Spanish, as half the whites and all the blacks offered themselves when they understood what our captain's words should mean. Finally he chose Harry, as having spoken first, and two Frenchmen, who were great swimmers, because our fellow-venturers boldly claimed, as of right, a half-share in every danger as well as in all plunder.

So from despair our captain's resolute words, so cheerfully spoken, raised them all in a short space to a lively hope; and all hands set eagerly to work to bind together some of the trees which the swollen river had brought down.

Meanwhile, more grieved than I can say to think that Harry was going to what seemed almost certain death, in spite of what Frank had said, I went to him to try and dissuade him from his purpose.

'Tush!' said he, 'what is there to fear?'

'Nothing for you to fear, I know well,' I answered; 'it is not that. It is what I fear. I have a most evil foreboding that if you go on this venture we shall never see you again.'

'Well, and what matter?' he laughed; 'a man must die once.'

‘Yes,’ said I, ‘but he need not rot to death in a Spanish prison, or die before his time. The Spanish shallops will be scouring all the coast, and must of a certainty pick you up like half-drowned rats ere ever you reach the Cabeças. Why should you do this when there is no need—you who of us all have most to live for?’

‘And what have I to live for,’ he answered, with clouding brow, ‘that others have not?’

‘You know! you know!’ I said. ‘Give me not the pain or shame of saying what. Nay, hear me then,’ I went on, as I saw a bitter reply rising to his lips; and then, determined to leave no means untried to preserve him to the woman I had so cruelly wronged, I told him how I had gone back to Ashted after that terrible night; how I had seen through the window his dear wife kissing his letter and weeping over his child; how I had marked a hundred signs whereby I knew her love for him was only the more pure and ardent for the trial it had undergone.

God be praised! if it was He that put the burning words in my mouth with which I told my tale and pleaded my cause. Long had I kept it pent up in my heart, for want of courage to tell him, as well as for fear of increasing his grief and his hate for me; and now it flowed with the full strength of the gathered flood which his long coldness had frozen up in me.

What joy was in my heart I cannot tell in words when, ere I had done, he seized my hand in his manly way and said, ‘Have your will, brother! Go in my

place. If we ever meet again we shall be brothers indeed once more, and brothers we should never have ceased to be had I known you as I should." Let what I do be a token to you. I know the danger of this service as well as you, and never did I think for any man I could turn back from such an attempt when I had offered myself and been chosen. To you, brother, and her, I sacrifice thus my honour in token of how high beyond all words I value this love you have both given me, who deserve it so little.'

Bright shone the sun in my heart, bright as the mid-day fire over our heads, as to the music of a hearty cheer we dropped down the river in our frail bark; Frank was steering her with a rude oar which had been shaped from a young tree, the two Frenchmen stood by with poles in case of need, and I managed the biscuit-bag whereof we had made our sail.

The Cimaroons had bitterly lamented not coming with us, but them Frank would have stay to succour those who remained, since there we had greatest need of them.

'No,' he had said; 'stay here for a little while to conduct my company by land if I return not. Yet, if it please God that I shall once put foot in safety aboard my frigate, I will, God willing, get you all aboard, in despite of all the Spaniards in the Indies.'

With this courageous speech he left the whole company in good heart, because they knew of a surety, since he had so passed his word, that if they were lost it would not be for want of the last effort of

the man who best in all the world knew how to save them.

Our voyage was evil enough to have damped any spirits less lifted with joy than mine, or less constant than Frank's. The whole time we were up to our waists in water as we sat, and as soon as we reached the open sea we found the swell so big that each wave surged up to our necks, and we had much ado to hold on. Moreover the sun so burned down upon us, all unprotected as we were, that what with the salt water and the scorching, we soon had little skin left that was not all blisters.

Yet a very smart breeze was blowing from the westwards, so that we made good progress towards the Cabeças, and so kept up our spirits. It was as the sun was getting low that Frank suddenly cried to me, 'Look! look! Jasper, ahead there off the point!'

I looked where he pointed and saw two large pinnaces struggling to weather the headland with oars against the freshening breeze.

'What shall we do?' said I. 'We must drive. We cannot stop. How shall we avoid them?'

'Avoid them!' said Frank, with a merry laugh. 'Why, lad, they are our own, and if we can but make them see, we are saved.'

'Yet perhaps they are prizes to Spaniards,' suggested one of the Frenchmen, 'and are manned by Spaniards.'

'No, monsieur, no,' said Frank; 'you never saw Spaniards row like that. See how they labour, and yet

I think they make no head. Pray God they be not cast away on the point!’

Indeed as we drew nearer there seemed no small danger of this. The wind was shifting more and more on to the land as it freshened, and we could see they made a lot of leeway.

‘They will never do it,’ said Frank; ‘they are too short of hands. It is hard to be so near safety, yet so far.’

Even as he spoke we saw them cease rowing and fall slowly under the lee of the point. In a few minutes they were out of sight, and we blankly confessed to ourselves that they must have resolved to ride out the rising gale and the night in the still water behind the point.

It was a bitter disappointment to us, and our new-found joy at finding our pinnaces were still safe gave way to a new-found grief. So intent had we been in watching them that we had not noticed how the shifting wind was driving us a-land. Straight ahead of us was the dark forest-clad point against which the surf was booming and spouting sheets of white spray. It was plain we could never weather it, and that if we continued as we were we must almost certainly be dashed to pieces in the foaming breakers.

Eagerly I watched, and tried to persuade myself our raft was bearing better room. Every tilt which the waves gave her I tried to fancy was a change of course, but still we drifted to leeward in spite of the rapid headway we made before the rising gale. All at once, as I watched, our head swung round to leeward and all chance was gone. I looked to see the cause

and saw Frank very calm and stern with the helm hard up.

‘Now, if ever,’ said he; ‘pray God to help us. Nay, look not scared, Jasper. It is our only chance. We cannot weather the point, and all that is left is to try and beach the raft this side, and then, if we land alive and whole, make about the point to the pinnaces afoot. All which we can well do, if it please God to send us a big wave and a pleasant beach.’

It was indeed a time for prayer. Soon close ahead we could see the breakers rolling in upon the shore rank after rank, a wilderness of boiling foam. I saw the two Frenchmen tighten their belts for the coming struggle. Each of them pulled out a great quoit of gold from his breast. Then they whispered together for a space and put them back. So I kept mine in spite of the danger, if we had to swim, and Frank kept his.

In a few minutes we were at the edge of our peril. Frank steadied the raft before the wind like the master hand he was; a raging mass of foam seemed to rise beneath us and shoot us towards the shore. What was in front we could not see. Like an arrow we flew, nor ever rested till we crashed upon the beach.

With that hoarse and terrible whistle with which the breakers on a shingly shore seem to draw their monstrous breath for a new effort to destroy, the wave that had borne us went screaming back. In a moment we had leaped on the rolling shingle and rushed up the beach as fast as our remaining strength and our shifting foothold would let us.

Again the angry sea swept at us, but it was too late. As once more it retired, drawing its strident breath, we dug hands, feet, and knees into the moving stones till it was gone, and then once more got up and ran. Ere another wave had burst we were in safety, lying breathless upon a flowery bank.

Frank was the first to move. I heard him mutter his words of thanksgiving for our safety, and then he called cheerfully to us in high spirit.

‘Up, lads, up,’ he said; ‘we must lose no time. See yonder light to windward; the gale will lessen in another hour, and the pinnaces as like as not will sail. We will go about the point now as quick as we can, and when we see them run our fastest, like men pursued, to give them a rattling fright, that they may prove their quickness to save us since they have been so slow hitherto. It is but fair dealing to put this jest on them for giving us such an evil sail.’

This we did, and were no sooner come about the point than we saw the blessed sight of our two pinnaces anchored in a quiet cove. Away went Frank running towards them as hard as he could, and we after him crying at the top of our voices. They seemed terribly afraid to see their captain thus suddenly appear with but three followers, and made the greatest speed to take us aboard.

At first Frank did not speak, but sat very solemn and stern, and we, taking our cue from him, did likewise; nor did they ask anything of what our running and sudden appearance might mean. Indeed they feared

our news was too terrible for them to be in a hurry to hear it.

‘How does all the company?’ said one at last.

‘Well,’ said Frank sullenly, which made them all look more alarmed than ever, till he could bear it no longer, and, bursting into a loud laugh, he drew his golden quoit from his doublet.

‘Look there!’ he cried, brandishing it in their faces. ‘At last our voyage is made!’

And so he told them how we had sped, and told the Frenchmen amongst them how their captain was left behind sore wounded, and comforted them by letting them know how two of his company remained with him, and how it was our intention to rescue him.

‘And tell me,’ he said, ‘how it was you discharged not the order I most straitly gave you to be in the Rio Francisco yesterday?’

‘We did our best,’ said the commander. ‘Yet the gale was so strong from the west that with all our rowing we could get no farther than this.’

‘Well, God be praised for His mercy,’ said Frank. ‘Surely is He wiser than man. Had you done as I said, you would have come to the river in the nick of time to be devoured by seven pinnacles from Nombre de Dios, which I doubt not were fitted out for that purpose. I think they have been driven in for fear of the gale, and will be out again as soon as it abates. Therefore we must make shift to continue our way with oars as soon as possible.’

And this they cheerfully did before an hour was

gone. Their short rest and our news seemed to make new men of them, so that, partly by infinite labour at the oars with our help, and partly by an abating of the wind, we came by morning into the Rio Francisco. There we took all our company and treasure aboard, and so sailed back to our frigate, and thence without mishap to our ships.

CHAPTER XXVII

FORT DIEGO was now all astir with preparations for our homeward journey. The first care was to divide our vast booty between ourselves and the Frenchmen; and I, being merchant to the expedition, was so entirely occupied in this that I had no leisure to visit my Señorita, of which it must be said I was secretly glad, for I knew not how to approach her.

What little time I had, after my day's weighing and portioning and scheduling was done, I spent in Harry's company. These hours of extreme danger to which we had recently been exposed seemed to have changed the whole world to us. In his gratitude for the poor service I had sought to do him, in his joy to think how his wife still loved him, he seemed to forget all the past and to hold no pleasure so high as being in my company, that he might talk over the old happy days and build plans for spending our new-won wealth, so as best to delight her in the new happy days that were to come.

My joy would have been complete had it not been that there still hung over my head the words which my Señorita had used when I bade her farewell. Each

hour I felt more keenly I must go to her and tell her plainly that what she wished could never be. I had no doubt of that. To me she was but a plaything. That I was more to her was a thing of which I felt pure shame. I accepted all the blame of it, as a man should. Yet however rightly he may look at it, the task is none the lighter when that man has to go to a woman and tell her he loves her not. The stoutest heart will feel a coward then.

It was not till the evening of the third day after our coming, when the plunder was all divided, and we had dismissed our French consorts with their share, that I found heart or leisure to approach her. As I neared the ship where the prisoners dwelt, and which had been hauled ashore for some time past, I could see her stretched lazily in her hammock. It was fastened between the mast and the bough of a tree which grew up hard by and spread its branches over the poop. Here it was that she loved to take her *siesta*, since it was a cool and shady place.

As I mounted the poop my discomfort at finding her alone, and at knowing I could not now honestly avoid saying my say, was only increased by her beauty, which never had seemed so great in my eyes. Dressed in a soft loose robe of white, she lay back at full length in her hammock, a picture of womanly grace. One white arm, on which her head rested, was half buried in her lustrous hair. It had become dishevelled in her sleep, and now fell in rich dark masses about her face and neck, enhancing their dazzling whiteness like some frame of

ebony in which is set a magic crystal. Her soft cheeks were flushed like those of a newly-wakened child, her ripe lips half parted, her dark-fringed eyelids almost closed. Her other arm lay across her, listlessly moving a fan of crimson feathers. Beyond that languid movement there was no sign of life or motion in her, save the rise and fall of the soft white robe as she drew her breath troublously, like one who is deeply moved.

I could not choose but pause, fascinated by a picture whose luxuriant beauty surpassed even the tangled tropic growth that formed its background. But I was soon awakened from my dream, and that rudely too. From behind the mast, where I could not see, came the deep tones of a man's voice pleading very low and earnest. She did not raise her eyes even then, but I could fancy she drew her breath more hardly still.

I could not hear the words, and started quickly forward lest I should. Of retreating I never once thought. My coward hesitation was turned to something akin to anger by that half-heard voice, and my only thought was to find out what bold man it was to whom my Señorita gave such familiar audience.

She started as she saw me stride to her, but in a moment fell again into her listless attitude, and looked languidly at the man behind the mast. He started too, and I saw to my little ease it was Mr. Oxenham. We stared hard and stiffly at each other, saying nothing. He seemed disturbed by my coming, but hid his confusion by drawing himself to his full height, and gently twisting his well-grown moustache with one hand, while the

other rested on his sword. So he stood looking at me and waiting, with eyebrows raised superciliously.

‘Has my worshipper no offering for his goddess?’ said the Señorita’s musical voice. ‘I expected something richer than silence after so long an absence.’

‘Nay, silence is golden,’ said Mr. Oxenham mockingly. ‘What would you more? Mr. Festing brings his best.’

I know not whether it were self-love or love of her that made their words hurt me so sore, but I know I had much ado to bridle my lips.

‘Truly, Señorita,’ said I, ‘silence is the most precious offering I have to give. Had I never laid on your altar aught less worthy than that, methinks I should have been a more loyal worshipper.’

She met my gaze with her dark eyes wide open for a moment, and then dropped them again with a strange little laugh.

‘Save me, then,’ she said, ‘from loyal worshippers! Such barren heretic ritual I call no-worship.’

‘Name it as you will, lady,’ I answered; ‘my comfort must still be that “no-worship” is better than sacrilege. If I cannot be a worshipper, at least I will not profane the shrine.’

She flushed a little higher at this, and looked at me again, half inquiring, half frightened, and then once more dropped her eyes.

‘Was this what you came hither to say, false worshipper?’ she said, as though a little vexed.

‘No, lady,’ I answered; ‘I had much to say, and I came to crave that you would walk with me along the

shore while I told my tale, but now I think it needs no telling.'

'Shall he come with us, Señor?' she said to Mr. Oxenham, who still stood twirling the end of his moustache.

'It is for my queen to command,' he said, 'whether I escort her or not.'

'Then, my worshipper,' she said, after a moment's hesitation, 'for this day your attendance is excused;' and with a queenly gesture she held out her little hand for me to salute.

It was hard to be dismissed so, although an hour ago I should have looked on any dismissal as the happiest thing that could befall me. Now it angered me. It flashed across my mind to turn roughly away from her, and refuse the caress she offered with such pretty insolence. Yet I hold, however ill a woman may treat a man, yet shall he never better his case by a rude behaviour toward her. So I took the little hand in my fingers, and put it to my lips with ceremonious courtesy, and so withdrew.

I turned round at the poop-ladder to descend, and was surprised to see her gazing after me wistfully; but she looked away hurriedly when she saw my eyes upon her, and laughed merrily at something, as I suppose, that Mr. Oxenham said to her. I fancied her merriment seemed to ring a little false; but maybe that was only my fancy.

My thoughts were very ill at ease as I sought my lodging. All had gone as I wished. The bonds wherein

I had suffered myself heedlessly to be bound to her were unloosed. I was free, and that more easily than I had thought ; yet somehow I did not feel released, but rather thrust out and cast away.

Harry came in to me later, and fell, as usual, to talking of the joy of our return. Yet to-night it seemed wearisome to hear him. As he pictured the pleasures of his coming life, of the untold joy of living again at Ashtead with the wife whom he had lost a little while and found again, my old library rose up ever in my mind, very cold and dim and lonely, and I found it hard to share his content.

As I listened to him my long, low chamber, with its gloomy rows of books, its uneasy settles, and its great stiff chair beside the hearth, became a vivid picture to me, as though I saw it. Each moment it grew more real and gloomy and lonely, till suddenly, I know not how, I seemed to see the beautiful form of the Señorita glowing in the great high-backed chair, and brightening the whole chamber with her sunny presence.

I crushed the fancy as it rose, but to little purpose. Try as I would, I could not choose but picture it again and again, not only as Harry talked, but also afterwards as soon as I closed my eyes to sleep. There she always was, in that long, low room, which ever was to me the centre of my life, curled up so prettily in the grim old chair that it seemed quite proud and happy to hold the sweet burden in its rough old arms.

As my wife I pictured her there ; but all the while I clearly saw what folly it was. How could I, a scholar,

wed a wayward piece of Eve's flesh like that, with her wild temper, her empty little head, her utter ignorance of all that made my life? In her whole nature there was not a note to sound in harmony with me. It was a mad folly even to think of it. I knew that; yet how she seemed to brighten the room as she sat curled up in the great chair by the hearth!

With great vigour I threw myself into the work of preparation which was going forward, in order that I might forget my foolish fancy. There was plenty to do; for Frank had determined to thoroughly refit and furnish our frigate from the *Pasha*, which ship, being much worn, he purposed to give to the Spanish prisoners, that they might go whither they would. It was then his intention to move with the frigate and pinnaces to the Cabeças, and thence make an effort to recover Captain Tetú and the treasure we had left in the care of the land-crabs.

In spite of all my sharp reasoning with myself, I became each day more wretched and distraught as our work neared completion and the day for dismissing our prisoners approached. Yet I was resolved not to see her.

'At her shrine,' I said ever to myself, 'I cannot worship; if I go to her temple again it can only be for sacrilege.'

So I went not near her again. But Mr. Oxenham, I think, was continually both on the ship and walking with my Señorita on the shore and in the woods, till the time came for the prisoners departing.

It was about a fortnight after our return from capturing the *recuas*, when we had taken all we desired from the *Pasha*, and we no longer feared any danger from our hiding-place being revealed, that Frank announced to the prisoners that they were to be freed on the morrow, and entertained them in the fort by way of taking leave.

That night I was captain of the watch. It was close on midnight, as feeling very sad and lonely I was looking out over the land-locked haven to where the *Pasha* lay ready to sail on the morrow. The moon was rising in great beauty over the dark foliage of the island, and as it shed its light upon the peaceful waters I saw, to my surprise, the *Pasha's* gondola being rowed toward the shore.

I made quickly for the spot where it was likely to touch the beach, telling the guard to stand by and listen well for my whistle, as I suspected some design of the prisoners upon our treasure. Concealing myself in the brakes close to the sea, I waited, and very soon heard the boat grate on the stones. Then I stepped out to see what it might mean ; and no less welcome sight could my eyes have seen.

For there stood Mr. Oxenham helping the Señorita ashore. I knew it was she, though for some reason I cannot tell she was dressed in the sailor garb in which I had seen her the night of the Cimaroons' attempt upon the prisoners. Whether those two had some wild scheme of escape together, or whether she hoped to pass observation till Mr. Oxenham could conceal her and

carry her home in the vice-admiral, which he was to command, I cannot tell.

Maybe it was only a romantic fancy of hers to attempt her escape in this disguise, as she had heard of other women doing in old tales, or maybe, knowing well how dazzling was her beauty in that array, she thought thereby to charm her escort the more. This, indeed, I think it did, for as he lifted her out of the boat with great tenderness, I saw him kiss her very lovingly. Then all trace of love or respect for her seemed to leave me, and I felt quite calm as I stepped forward to do what seemed my plain duty, and passed them the challenge.

‘What ! again ?’ said Mr. Oxenham fiercely. ‘Why, what a meddler are you, that have not heart to love a fair wench, and will yet prevent a man that has !’

She started away from him when she saw me. Had she clung to him for protection, I think I could hardly have kept as calm as I did.

‘Love or no love, Mr. Oxenham,’ said I, ‘it is no matter of that here. What you intend I know not, but it is against the general’s plain orders that any prisoner should leave the *Pasha* before she sails, and this lady I must see aboard again.’

‘What a pestilent meddler it is !’ muttered Mr. Oxenham, drawing his sword. ‘If you want her for your own, by heaven, you shall fight for her.’

‘Pray you be content, Mr. Oxenham,’ I cried, giving ground, ‘or I must summon the guard. What madness is this ?’

He pressed on so hard, crying fiercely to me to draw, that I saw an encounter could not be avoided; yet I would not whistle for the watch, half for her sake once more, seeing how she was clad and what men would say of her, half for shame of seeking help after Mr. Oxenham's blade was drawn on me.

Hoping the better to worst him without doing great hurt, I took my cloak upon my left arm instead of my dagger and drew. He was coming at me with his buckler advanced, and his sword uplifted for a cross-blow like to the *mandritto sgualembato*, but very unscholarly. So I fell from my draw to the good ward *di testa*, as Marozzo teaches, to receive his blow on my rapier, and hay! straightway in *punta reversa* threatened my *imbroccata* at his throat over his hand. He was cleverly ready for it with his buckler, so I lowered my ward suddenly *lunga e larga*, and throwing a resolute *stoccata* under his defence, compelled him to spring backwards out of distance.

He came on again immediately with a good down-right fendant, as though he would have broken my ward by main force. I avoided it by a quick *passado* to the right, pushing at the same time a *stoccata* which he took again on his buckler. But it was only a feint of mine to make him advance his defence, and so stop him recovering quickly. It served its purpose well. For I was able to cast my cloak over his blade before he could make his recovery, and so, passing my left leg forward, I seized his sword by the hilt. At the same moment I threatened an *imbroccata* at his face,

and while he raised his buckler to bear my thrust, gave his hilt-points such a mighty wrench with my left that, seeing he had not the Italian grip, I was able to tear his sword from his grasp.

It was no fair encounter. He was a pretty swordsman at the old swashing sword and buckler play, but having been at sea all his manhood he had never had occasion to learn the new fence as I had, and would not, I think, if he had been able, for, like most Englishmen of that time, he greatly despised it. I could not but be sorry for him to see him stand at my mercy, as he now did, nor could I resent his angry words.

‘Curse on your foining Italian birdspit play,’ said he savagely as I returned him his sword. ‘Curse on your skewer scullion tricks. Did you fight like a man, you should not have won her. Still won her you have, and by that I abide. Take her, and rest you merry with your light-o’-love.’

With that he took his sword, and, with a mocking salute to the Señorita, strode rapidly away. I looked for no less in him. For in all points of arms I had ever found him a most precise gentleman, and had no doubt, since he was worsted, he would honourably leave the field to me. So I slowly went to where my Señorita’s fairy form leaned against the boat.

‘Lady,’ said I, ‘think not I deal hardly with you, but at a word you must indeed go back.’

‘No, no, Gasparo,’ she said, sinking on her knees before me. ‘Take me, for the love of Mary, take me, since you have gloriously won me. Indeed I do not

love him. I did but use him to play upon your love and make it grow as great as mine. Tell me not I have killed it. I did but go with him because he promised to deliver me from my misery. It was only that I hoped to win you at last.'

'Peace, peace, lady, as you value your honour,' said I, at my wits' end how to keep my resolution. 'This thing cannot be. The general would never suffer you to abide with us. It could only end in strife and dishonour. Indeed you must go back.'

'Oh, Gasparo,' she pleaded, clasping my knees, 'you know not what you do. You love me, and know it not. You love me, and send me back to my misery, when we might know such joy together. You cannot tell what it is you condemn me to. You cannot tell the horror of a woman's life when she is wedded to one she loathes.'

'Wedded?' cried I, aghast.

'Yes,' she answered wildly. 'Have pity on me. Do not hate me for it. I did not tell you, nor did the others, because I pleaded with my father to pass for unwed, that I might the better win favour for them. So I said, but in truth it was that I might taste the joys I had never known. I was hardly out of childhood ere they wedded me to an old man for his wealth. He was bitter and cruel and ugly, an ape that I loathed. Yet I had no respite from his detested presence till he went to Lima on his affairs. Afterwards he wrote for me to join him. I was on my way thither when you captured me, and at last I saw my occasion to know for

once what it was to be wooed. Oh Gasparo, hate me not for it, but rather pity me. I am beautiful ; I know it. I was made for men to love, yet never knew what it was to be wooed by one true man. Pity me and have mercy. I cannot go back now.'

Horror-struck to find, as it were, that my sin had followed me even to that far island in the West, where at least I might have hoped to be free, my courage almost forsook me. A destiny, such as one short year ago I might have laughed at as the last to be mine, seemed now for ever fastened upon me. Once more I grasped the hilt of Harry's sword for strength, and then firmly took the little hands in mine and freed myself.

She stood up before me then, gazing in sad entreaty in my face as I implored her to go back. I showed her how, even were I willing to do as she wished, Frank would never permit it. I tried, as well as I could for shame, to show her how great was the sin she would bring upon her soul.

'It is hopeless,' she said as I ceased. 'I see it is hopeless to move you. I must even return to the misery you have made doubly hard to bear. Farewell, Gasparo, farewell.'

She held out her hand to me as she spoke. I took it coldly, my other hand on my sword. But that was not the end. With a sudden wild impulse she flung her arms about me, and my lips were tingling with one last passionate kiss. She had sprung into the boat and pushed off ere I hardly knew what she had done.

'So, faint heart,' she cried, as she stood up beautiful

in the moonlight, 'so I set my sign upon you.' When another comes to whom you would give what you deny to me, may she taste my kiss still lingering there and learn, though you know it not, that you have loved before.'

With difficulty she rowed herself back to the ship. I watched her shapely figure grow less and less across the moonlit water, till she was lost behind the dark hull, and I was alone once more.

CHAPTER XXVIII

I NEVER saw my Señorita again. Early next morning the *Pasha's* anchors were hove up, and Mr. Oxenham went aboard to work her out through the tortuous channels by which she had entered more than six months ago.

‘ It took all one day and part of the next to get the ship free, and Mr. Oxenham did not quit her till she was quite clear of the shoals. What passed between him and my Señorita then I cannot say. Whether they found means whereby afterwards letters went between them I do not know, but when years after news of his end came I could not but think it might have been so; and, in spite of seeming contradictions in the varying reports that reached us, I have often wondered whether my Señorita were not the same fair lady for whose sweet sake, less than three years after, when he had won undying honour by having sailed the South Sea first of all Englishmen, he madly did that whereby he not only lost all the wealth he had taken there, but also his trusty company and his fair name, ay, and gave up his wasted life beside as a pirate on a Spanish gallows at Lima. But let that pass. I bear him no ill-will,

and trust he rests in peace, as, for all his sins, his courageous spirit well deserves.

For such a spirit indeed he had, and, next to the general, our whole company had conceived greater hope in him than in any other. So that, when a few days after the release of the prisoners we came with the frigate and the pinnaces to the Cabeças, he was chosen to lead the attempt to recover the French captain and the buried treasure. For in spite of all Frank could say we would not suffer him to go, saying his life was too precious to us now to be risked on so dangerous a service, seeing he was the only man on whom we could count to carry us back to England.

Mr. Oxenham undertook the desperate service with the same light heart wherewith he always faced the greatest perils, but was not rewarded according to his courage. For, on coming to the Rio Francisco, he found in most forlorn condition one of the men who had stayed behind with Monsieur Tetú. From him he had news that the brave captain had been taken half an hour after our departure, and his fellow a little later, because he would not cast away his treasure, and so could not run fast enough to escape.

Moreover he told us that some two thousand Spaniards and negroes had been digging and runting up the ground for the space of a mile every way about the place where they must have learned from the prisoners that our treasure was buried. This Mr. Oxenham found to be true; for, notwithstanding the report, he still would go and see for himself, and was rewarded by

the discovery of thirteen silver bars and some quoits of gold, which the Spaniards had not been able to find.

At last, then, our voyage was indeed made, and all we wanted for our return homewards was another good stout frigate; and to this end the general resolved to beat the same covert we had always found so full of game—to wit, the coast beyond Carthagena, about the mouth of the Rio Grande.

All were very merry over the near hope of our return, except, I think, myself. As for me, I could not but brood over what I had lost or escaped from, I knew not which to call it. I fear I was but a very doleful companion, and Harry, being now in great spirits with all the world, would not let me rest.

‘So your Señorita would not stay with you?’ he said, with a twinkle in his eye that much belied his pretended seriousness.

‘I did not ask her,’ I answered.

‘Not ask her!’ said he, ‘and wherefore not, in a devil’s name? Why, lad, you were over ears in love with her.’

‘You are merry,’ said I, a little testily I think, for it angered me that both he and she should say this, while I was for ever telling myself I could not be so foolish. ‘I could as soon have loved one of those glistening butterfly-birds that are all sparkle and humming, and nothing of them beside.’

‘Well, what of that?’ said he. ‘Were I Pythagorean, I could find no better case for a true woman’s soul than one of those same dainty, merry, little humming birds,

that in these past months have so often beguiled us when there was little else to make us forget our troubles.'

'True,' I answered. 'Such qualities will make a plaything, but never a wife.'

'Well, I know not,' he said; 'but I think a wife is mostly what a husband makes her, and doubt if a man may not make as good a one out of a plaything as anything else.'

He should have known, yet I could not think him right, nor do I now. I had no heart to pursue such talk then, so when he continued to rally me I hastily told him the truth.

'Forgive me,' he said, growing serious directly, and putting his hand on my shoulder, 'if you can forgive such a brute-beast as I am to torment you thus. What a curst unbroken tongue is mine! You would have kept her marriage from me to shield her fame. Truly, lad, in comparison to you, I deserve no woman's love.'

So he said, not knowing himself, for never was woman's love better bestowed than on him, yet he knew it not, and I verily believe, felt that he never could do enough for his wife to repay her generosity in marrying him. She thought no less, and often told me so. What wonder that their lives were happy!

We fell in with our French consort again soon after this, and they bore us company till they heard we were going past Carthagena, but this they would not venture with us, since the whole Plate Fleet lay there with its well-armed wafters ready for sea.

So we parted company once more at St. Bernardo, and then Frank stood in towards the city, and ran past with a large wind hard by the harbour's mouth, in sight of the whole fleet. Not one dared stir out after us, though we braved them with our music, and the Cross of St. George at our top, and all our silken streamers and ancients floating down to the water defiantly. Perhaps it was a bit of foolish bravado, but Frank laughed and rubbed his hands, and said it was worth another *recua* to have done it, which the whole company agreed, being half mad to think how we had succeeded in our wild adventure in despite of the whole power of the Indies.

The same night we fell in with a frigate of twenty-five tons, well laden with victuals, coming out of the river. We told the crew of our necessity, and used other persuasions to such good effect that at last they were content to go ashore, and leave their ship in our hands. Whereupon we returned to the Cabeças, and there, having rested seven days to careen our ships and prepare them for the voyage home, we bade farewell to our trusty Cimaroons, greatly contenting them with the iron-work of the pinnaces, which we broke up. To Pedro Frank presented a very goodly scimitar, which poor Monsieur Tetú had given him in return for his hospitalities at their first meeting. So greatly did the Cimaroon chief value this toy that he would not be content till Frank had accepted four great wedges of gold from his particular store.

It was a private gift to our general, and I think it

noteworthy, as showing his just dealings with his mariners and venturers, that he would not keep those wedges, but cast them into the common store.

‘Had not the venturers set me forth,’ said he, ‘and had not you, my lads, so truly borne your parts, I should never have had this present; wherefore I hold you should all enjoy the proportion of your benefits, whatsoever they be.’

So we took our leave of the Spanish Main, and, bearing room for Cape Antonio, passed to Havana, where we took a bark, the last of all our captures, which had been many, indeed, both for numbers and humanity in dealing with them, past anything that had been seen before. For at that time there were above two hundred frigates belonging to the cities of the Spanish Main and the Islands, ranging from ten to one hundred and twenty tons. Most of these we dealt with during our stay, and some of them twice and thrice, yet of all the crews we captured we hurt not a single man, save in the heat of fight, nor did we burn or sink one ship save in act of war, nor keep any save for our bare necessity. And so it was that Frank won himself a name of terror along the whole Spanish Main, and therewith a reputation for kindness and mercy, both of which were never forgotten, and stood him in good stead many a time in after years.

He protested that God manifestly blessed him for the just chastisement, tempered with mercy, which he had inflicted on the idolaters; for that He so bountifully supplied us with rain for our necessities, and wind for

our speeding, that we had no cause to touch at Newfoundland for our refreshing, but within twenty-three days we passed from the Cape of Florida to the Isles of Scilly, and on Sunday morning, the 9th day of August 1573, swaggered bravely into Plymouth harbour, amidst the thunder of our great pieces, the braying of our trumpets, and the gay fluttering of all our flags and streamers and ancients.

It was a sight to make a man forget all his sorrows, to see the Hoe quickly brighten like a flower-bed with the Sunday clothes of the godly people of Plymouth, and yet not godly enough to stay with the preacher when they knew whose salutations were disturbing their prayers. So with one accord they left the poor man, and hurried off to hear the sermon Frank was preaching with his ordnance and his music.

‘Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into Heaven?’ That was his text, and so well he expounded it with a sight of our ballast to all who came aboard, that I think there was hardly one that day who did not vow he would no longer stand still disputing and railing against Antichrist, but go forth and win gold for God out of the idolaters’ treasure-house.

Wild were the rejoicings in Plymouth, and there was no one to check them. The Queen’s grace was in no mood just then to hide our achievement under a bushel. Nay, rather she liked nothing better than to flaunt it in Philip’s eyes, to show him she had a power he little dreamed of to answer “the late-discovered felonious practices of Spain against her glorious crown and life.

Yet I tarried not longer than our business demanded, for Harry could not rest till he was at Ashtead again, nor would he depart thither without me. In vain I urged him to go alone and let me follow later, after he had seen his wife and all was smooth again.

‘No, lad,’ said he; ‘we fled together, let us return together. It was one cause drove us forth. That is ended and forgotten. If I can go back, it is because you also may go back. Therefore one must not go without the other.’

So we rode together, Harry, the Sergeant, and I, and all the way to London it was for us a triumphal procession. The news of Frank’s daring exploit had spread from town to town before us. The people were half wild at the tidings, and came gaping to see us with their own eyes, and hear from our own lips the truth of the tale that seemed too glorious to believe; to hear how Englishmen at last had trod that inviolate soil which seemed to give a magic and resistless power to Spain, their dreaded enemy, and had broken its mysterious spell for ever, and how we had so plenteously enriched ourselves out of their very heart-wells in despite of all their boasted power.

It seemed a strange and merry thing to them. They could only laugh as though it were some rude jest we had put on the Spaniards, and make merry over Philip’s and Alva’s wry faces to think of a poor English captain quietly plucking their beards with one hand, and cutting their purses with the other. That looming shadow in the South which yesterday was a monster of

terror, to-day was only a bogie to frighten babies withal. So they strutted about, boasting that though the King of Spain might set all the silly geese over the sea in a flutter with his *braggadocio*, yet one quacking of an English drake was enough to set him shivering on his throne.

I trust we were more modest than they. Yet in those young days of England's growing strength I cannot blame her if she laughed and crowed like a lusty baby over each new step he learns to take.

Our triumphal progress should have put us in good heart; yet, as we approached our journey's end, a weight seemed to settle on us both. As we rode from Gravesend each well-known object served to recall the misery of the day we saw them last; and for the first time, I think, Harry began to doubt whether it would be so easy to bring things back to the old track again.

He had sent word forward that he was coming, but no more, not knowing what to write. Thus we could not tell how things stood at Ashted, or even whether Mrs. Waldyve were there at all.

It was afternoon before we reached Rochester, and we stayed at the 'Crown' to dine, but did scant justice to the host's provision. Harry grew only more melancholy when we were alone.

'Would I could tell if she would forgive me!' he said at last. 'How can I hope for it, who left her so basely in the midst of all her grief? Tell me again, Jasper, all you saw when you went back to Ashted after that sad day.'

So I told my tale again, and dwelt on those words she sang, giving him to hope for the best.

‘Yet I think I will tarry till to-morrow,’ he said. ‘It is late; I am weary. It will be too sudden for her at so late an hour. I will tarry, and send her word I am waiting here for her to bid me come. Maybe she is not there, and maybe grief has killed her.’

He sank his voice very low as he uttered this new fear, and before I could tell what to answer him—for, God knows, I too had little heart for this meeting—the Sergeant came in and said the horses were ready. Harry looked at me, but I could give him no help. My shame was still quick within me, and my only desire was to put off the end, which I could not foresee, but only fear.

‘Sergeant,’ said Harry at last, desperately, ‘we think it too late to go on. We will lie here to-night, and come to Ashtead betimes to-morrow.’

‘Cry you mercy, sir,’ said the Sergeant, in a rebellious burst. ‘If you can be within two hours’ ride of that peerless lady and not go to her, it is more than I have power or discipline for. So I crave leave to ride on alone with all speed.’

‘But how know you we are within two hours’ ride of her?’ said Harry weakly, under the Sergeant’s rebuking glance.

‘Save your worship,’ cried the Sergeant, ‘is that what ails you? Then take it from me, you can ride thither without fear of not finding her, for my good friends the drawers tell me she has abode at home ever since your departing, though it is true, that none have seen her abroad of late.’

And with that the Sergeant brought us our rapiers and cloaks, and for very shame we were bound to take them and beat an honourable retreat along the line which, by accident or design, he had left open for us.

So, without more ado, we rode out through the throng which had assembled to greet us when they heard we had come. The good people followed us up the street to the gates, and then fell to cheering us for two heroes, little thinking what sorry hearts those same heroes carried. So they cheered us, and Drake, and the Queen, as we rode out across the low land by the river, nor ceased till we began to climb the downs.

The Medway lay glistening in its mazy channels below us as we topped the hill. Rainham church-tower rose dimly before us; on either hand the turf swept downward from the road, broken by clumps of trees in every hollow where they could find shelter from the wind. These and a score of other familiar landmarks seemed to bring the past very near, and only increased my fear that the short time we had been away could not avail to heal the fearful wound I had made.

Gladly would I have turned off on the road which led to Longdene, as I had that first day I had seen Harry's wife, but I was resolved to go on to the end with him, not knowing how great his need might soon be of a comforter; for his doubts had infected me with a heart-sickness as sore as his own.

The bright picture of her as she was that day faded away as the gables and turrets of Ashted came in sight, and I gave way to wondering what she looked like now,

and of what she thought within those dim walls. And that wondering ceased as we rode under the gateway and dismounted. I could only then think of my brother. He was deadly pale, and clutched at my arm as he trod the steps, and stopped like one about to faint.

‘Would she had come out to meet us,’ he murmured, ‘when she heard our horses in the court. She must have heard them.’

I knew not what to say, but pressed his hand and put my arm through his to steady him up the steps. He made a great effort as he reached the top and threw open the door of the hall.

There she stood in the lurid torch-light by the great hearth, as though just risen from her seat. She was pale and wild-eyed, and stood irresolute, gazing her heart out at him, with her white hands spread out a little in front of her as though the last spark of hope were dying within her, and she hardly dared to plead. Ah me ! it was a picture of long-endured misery as I pray God I may never see again, and, still less, cause.

Harry stood, it seemed so long, waiting for some sign from her, but she stood like a statue with no power to move. Then he advanced slowly towards her, and I followed into the hall.

I had hardly stepped within when a sudden light came into her eyes as she caught mine. She had seen me then for the first time. She had seen me, and, God be praised, knew by my being there that all must be forgiven.

With a little glad cry she sprang forward, and in a

moment those two I loved so well, and had wronged so deeply, were locked lip to lip in each other's arms.

I heard a stifled sob behind me, and turned to see the tears rolling down the Sergeant's bronzed face. Then we went forth that those two might be alone ; but very soon they came and called me back, and fed me with such loving words as I could not have looked for had I been their greatest benefactor and not their curse.

Their most gentle dealing with me quite unmanned me, so that I easily was persuaded to lie at Ashtead that night, but on the morrow I thought it best to go. " Very dim and lonely was my library that night. My consuming grief was dead, drowned in their happiness and gentle usage of me. Yet it was very lonely. I tried to read, but each book I sought availed less to fasten my thoughts. So I sat musing on all that had befallen me those last months, and trying not to think how empty and sad my great chair looked without the sweet burden which, as it were, I had once seen nestling there.

That fancy grew dim as the months wore on, and I was ever at Ashtead as of old playing with little Fulke, or hunting with Harry, or talking over old times with Sergeant Culverin, who quickly settled down as Harry's right-hand on his estate, and so continued till his honest spirit passed away. But with Mrs. Waldyve I read no more then, nor till years after, when, through my thrice-blessed friendship with Signor Bruno, a deep-

set faith came to comfort my ripening years and hers.

Indeed it was little I read at all, save in books of travel and cosmography. Study seemed a very poor and dry food to me at that time, the more so as there was no longer any one to urge me to it. Mr. Cartwright's strife was now nothing but a din of unmeaning words in my ears. Good Mr. Follet, my only other scholar friend, was dead, and his cherished '*Apology*' still-born; for though he bequeathed the manuscript to me to set forth, I found its original obscurity and tangled learning (in so far as it was legible) so overlaid and involved and interlined with added matter from the four quarters of earthly and unearthly wisdom as to be past human understanding.

Each day then I saw more clearly that all was changed with me, and grew to know that thenceforth, till age should bring me peace and studious quiet, my content could only be found at Frank Drake's side, or in such great and stirring work as his.

And so it was, and not without good reward either, both in honour and riches. Yet there was nothing which my unworthy service earned of Her Majesty's grace and bounty that I valued higher than the loving welcome which was so plentifully bestowed on me at Ashtead each time I came home.

Printed by R. & R. CLARK, Edinburgh.

